

# MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

A Comparative Study of Unified and Separate  
Systems

ASOK MUKHOPADHYAY



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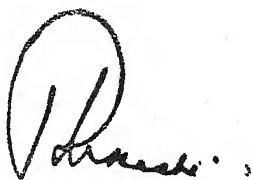
*DEDICATION*

TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER  
PROFESSOR AMULYA DHAN MUKHOPADHYAY

## FOREWORD

This is an empirical study of the working of municipal personnel administration based on the unified and separate systems in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The results of the study cast doubts on the supposed advantages of a statewide cadre of municipal personnel. On the other hand, a separate system of municipal personnel may have many advantages provided there is a reasonable degree of fiscal capacity of the municipal governments.

The study was made possible with a plan grant from the Union Ministry of Works and Housing. I am glad that Dr. Asok Mukhopadhyay could complete the study within a short time available to him.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P.R. Dubhashi', is written over a horizontal line.

(P.R. DUBHASHI)

NEW DELHI



## PREFACE

The present study on municipal personnel administration is based on a comparative empirical analysis of the unified and separate personnel systems as practised in municipal administration of Rajasthan and Gujarat respectively. Based on extensive field investigations in these two states, the present research has sought to examine the relevance of the right type of personnel system for making municipal administration effective. That is to say, the focus of the inquiry has been on the impact of personnel administration on the effectiveness of municipal government in its regulatory as well as service delivery activities. It goes without saying that efficient personnel management is just one of the important inputs which help produce effective municipal administration: adequate financial resources and political leadership of good calibre are other crucial inputs. It has therefore to be borne in mind that municipal personnel administration cannot be judged in isolation from the other crucial factors. Subject to this broader consideration, the present study leads to the conclusion that the case for unified municipal personnel system is not at all strong; rather the separate personnel system scores better in municipal administration provided, of course, suitable corrective measures could be taken for eliminating some of its disadvantages. Autonomy of municipal government is a political value which is injured by the unified municipal personnel system.

The present research has been funded by the Ministry of Works and Housing, Government of India, and sponsored by the Centre for Urban Studies of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. I am particularly grateful to Shri M.K. Mukherjee, IAS, formerly Secretary in the Union Ministry of Works and Housing, to Shri L.M. Menezes, IAS, Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry of Works and Housing, and to Shri P.R. Dubhashi, IAS, Director of the IIPA, for enthusiastically supporting the research proposal and extending all facilities in conducting

this research project. Two of my colleagues, Professor Abhijit Datta of the Centre for Urban Studies (IIPA) and Professor Mohit Bhattacharya of the Department of Political Science, Calcutta University, have rendered their valuable opinions and critical comments on the first draft of the research report. I remain greatly indebted to them.

I received unstinted cooperation from the officials of both the state governments of Rajasthan and Gujarat for conducting my field study. In this connexion I must place on record my debt of gratitude to Shri A.L. Roongta, IAS, of Rajasthan, Shri P.V. Bhatt, IAS, of Gujarat, Shri K.K. Chaudhury of Rajasthan Administrative Service, Shri H.S. Sharma of Rajasthan Municipal Service, Shri G.C. Dal of Gujarat Administrative Service and many other colleagues of theirs who extended to me all kinds of facilities for conducting field investigation and data collection. However, I personally remain responsible for my perception of the problems, assessment of the personnel systems studied here, and all comments and judgments made in the following pages.

Shri K.K. Chawla of the Centre for Urban Studies (IIPA) smilingly performed the tedious job of typing the manuscript, for which he deserves my thanks.

ASOK MUKHOPADHYAY

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# INTRODUCTION

Municipal government by its nature is basically service-oriented. Gone are those days when municipal government used to be defended on grounds of liberty of the cities and towns from the control of the central government. Municipal government is still deemed necessary, because of the fact that certain services can be better rendered and citizens better served if there is a locally responsible government to take decisions locally and implement them to the satisfaction of the local people. Opinions and experiences vary from country to country and also from one region to another within the same country in regard to the extent of functions that can be satisfactorily performed at the municipal level. Hence it is on grounds of both accountability and efficiency that municipal government is generally defended as a necessary institution within the broader political-administrative system.

In their task of maintaining and delivering services to the citizen, municipalities require an administrative framework supported by alert and devoted personnel not only in the higher levels but also at the cutting edge of administration which particularly in municipal government projects the organisation's image in the public eye. At no level of government is the need of injecting manpower with necessary training and higher degree of sensitivity to public needs felt more acutely. Being a service-oriented organisation with the minimum of mechanisation in its operations, municipal bodies are to depend heavily on the competence and devotion of their staff in the performance of their tasks.

For satisfactorily performing its allotted tasks municipal government needs a certain degree of autonomy of decision-making, adequate financial resources, and properly skilled manpower or personnel. Autonomy and finance are inter-related and so also are autonomy and personnel management. Hence in evaluating municipal personnel management the issues of municipal autonomy and municipal finances have

to be taken note of insofar as these would appear to be relevant.

Apart from mobilisation of financial resources, the problem of personnel administration seems to be the most important aspect of municipal management. On the nature and quality of personnel administration depends, to a large extent, the standard of municipal services rendered. As problems of urban living become more numerous and complicated, the need for effective municipal personnel system becomes more and more urgent. With increasing pace of urbanisation and municipalisation the demands on municipal personnel administration become stronger. Today all kinds of special skill and expertise are needed to cater to the needs of municipal government. The elected leadership helps establish the vital political link between a municipality and those who live within its area. But the people have to come into daily contact with a variety of municipal officers and employees: generalist, specialist, managerial, supervisory, clerical, skilled and unskilled employees. As the areas and functions of municipal government are increased, there would be a strong need for larger number of officers and employees of all categories. On the quality of personnel management depends the image of municipal government in the eyes of the larger society. Even when greater financial resources could be mobilised, municipal services may not improve if municipal personnel administration is not properly planned and managed. Well-thought-out development plans would fail if the personnel who would implement them are not properly recruited, compensated, trained and managed. The mode of recruitment, scales of salaries, wages, and other allowances, leave conditions, policies of posting and transfer, rules of disciplinary control, promotion system, welfare benefits and retirement benefits, training facilities, management of conflicts within the system (both interpersonal and inter-agency/departmental)—all these constitute the crux of personnel administration. As municipal government is service-oriented, the system of personnel administration in municipal government becomes all the more significant. Moreover, in the Indian context, another important aspect of municipal administration is its labour-intensive character.

In India the impression has gained over the years, whether by default or design, that as a rule municipal bodies are weak, corrupt and inefficient. As a result, a vicious circle has been created: municipal bodies are unable to attract and retain qualified staff and this in turn confirms the image of municipal government as inefficient administration. Consequently state governments and other authorities have lost confidence in the capacity of municipal bodies to undertake the implementation of development projects. In fact, municipal bodies in India are mostly looked upon as 'dustbin-sweeper' agencies. Not only does this outlook on municipal government militate against the process of democratic decentralisation in urban areas, but it has in practice led to the reverse process of an increasing assumption of the tasks of urban development and urban management by state government departments, development authorities, city improvement trusts and such other agencies.

It is really idle to talk of effective urban management without addressing the serious personnel problems involved. Municipal personnel administration assumes greater importance since the municipal bodies deal with a large number of functions and services which affect day-to-day urban living and environment. The quality of urban living would depend, to a large extent, on the quality of municipal personnel administration.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES OF MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Municipal personnel management appears different from personnel management in central/state government on a number of points. First of all, municipal functions are mostly labour-intensive, and a large number of unskilled hands are to be engaged in connexion with conservancy services. Therefore, a substantial proportion of total revenue expenditure has to be devoted towards paying for salaries, wages, and other allowances to the employees. Secondly, some services crucial to day-to-day urban living like water supply, drainage and sewerage, garbage disposal, street lighting, public health functions and so on are dependent on proper functioning of

the municipal personnel management. Thirdly, municipal personnel administration is closest to the citizens, because there is generally a high frequency of citizen contact with municipal administration. The public image of municipal administration depends largely on the functional efficiency of municipal personnel. Fourthly, municipal personnel have to function under closest public scrutiny by the locally elected councillors as well as the general public. The issues and problems which municipal personnel deal with, and the decisions they are called upon to take, are 'local' in nature. Municipal personnel are to work in the full gaze of public criticism at the local level by the local consumers of municipal services. At the municipal level, almost a face-to-face relationship exists between municipal personnel, local political leadership and citizens. And the nature of this relationship often determines the level of performance of the personnel functions of municipal administration.

One of the main weaknesses of municipal government in India has been the absence of a well-organised and effective system of personnel administration. It needs no emphasis to say that no organisation can produce results unless competent personnel is attracted to it and retained. Currently a growing imbalance can be seen in India between the civic needs of citizens and the actual performance of municipal administration. To meet the growing challenges of managing urban development, an efficient and effective municipal personnel system appears absolutely necessary. The essential ingredients of an effective municipal management are the employees' integrity, skill, competence, contentment, devotion to duty, and loyalty to the organisation they serve. Different types of personnel systems have been in existence in municipal administration in the different states of India and they have produced different kinds of experience.

Over the years since independence it has been found that there has been a perceptible preference for introducing integrated and/or unified personnel system in municipal administration in different states of India. On the other hand, some other states have retained the traditional separate system in which municipal authorities recruit and manage their own personnel. Some theoretical reasons have been given in favour

of these different personnel systems in municipal administration. But there has been till now little concrete research for examining the actual experience gained through the different personnel systems in municipal administration. The field of municipal personnel administration has remained virtually unresearched. Except the proceedings of a seminar on the subject held at the IIPA in 1971 and an edited volume of papers, there is not much printed literature on this important theme.<sup>1</sup> Some text-books contain a chapter on municipal administration, which is generally a summary of the views of the different official committees. The different committees appointed by the Government of India from time to time have referred to this problem and suggested reforms based on abstract argumentation and not on any detailed field research. Some concrete empirical research is, therefore, called for in order to see to what extent the theoretical assumptions and arguments put forward in favour of integrated/unified personnel system in municipal administration hold good so far as the actual experience of municipal administration is concerned. It is not yet established through concrete research that statewide unified caderisation is necessarily a superior staffing device than the separate personnel system with its flexibility, planning, specialising and most important of all, unified control. The present research intends to perform this very job through a study of two contrasting systems of municipal personnel administration found in two states: Rajasthan and Gujarat.

### *Critical Issues*

A number of critical issues have been identified for data collection and pursuit of investigation in course of field study of municipal administration in Rajasthan, where a unified municipal personnel system has been introduced, and in Gujarat, where a separate municipal personnel system is followed.

The first critical issue informing the present research

<sup>1</sup>*Municipal Personnel Systems* (proceedings of the seminar at IIPA, New Delhi, held on June 7-8, 1971); A.P. Padhi (ed.), *Personnel System of Urban Local Bodies in India*, Agra, L.N. Agarwal, 1977.



relates to the claim of unified personnel system that it can attract more qualified people to, and retain them in, municipal service than does a separate personnel system. Secondly, it has been examined whether unified personnel system opens up greater opportunities of promotion and offers better career prospects and higher pay-scales, and hence whether motivations for work among municipal officers and employees are stronger in a unified system than is possible in a separate personnel system. The third issue has been whether it is easier in a unified personnel system than in a separate personnel system to resist local political pressures in respect of policy implementation and internal management of municipal administration. And finally, the operation of the management of unified municipal personnel system has been examined to see whether this system can produce the benefits of manpower planning and effective management unless all grades of municipal personnel are brought under it.

### *Scope and Method of Study*

The basic objective of the present research is to study how far personnel administration as an essential ingredient of management capability of municipal bodies makes a difference in the effectiveness of municipal government. The pros and cons of unified municipal personnel system as practised in Rajasthan have been compared and contrasted with those of separate personnel system as practised in Gujarat. For this purpose, large municipal corporations have not been studied, because the management of municipal corporations in big cities, in some respects, is usually somewhat different from that of municipalities.

So far as the municipalities in a state are concerned, four each from Rajasthan and Gujarat have been selected on the criterion of their population size for the purpose of field study. Of these, one is a big municipality (class I), two are of medium size (class II), and the third is a small municipality (class III). The final selection of the municipalities has been made after consultation with the state governments concerned.

Most of the findings of the field studies have been obtained through long and indepth discussions with the presidents

and other elected members of the municipal boards/councils, the administrators (in case of superseded municipalities), the chief officers/commissioners/executive officers, other heads of municipal administration, and also with the officers of the departments and directorates of municipal administration in both the states. During these discussions-cum-interviews both the multiple-choice structured interview schedules and unstructured open-ended interview technique have been used.

Secondly, in regard to some points the case-study method has been used to find out the intricacies of the decision-making process involved. This method has proved to be useful in discovering the advantages and drawbacks of some important aspects of the contrasting personnel systems.

Thirdly, the method of content analysis of government documents, reports and files has been used for data collection and gathering information regarding the municipal personnel systems.

The effectiveness of municipal personnel administration has been sought to be studied with reference to: (a) the relation between elected leadership and officers/employees; (b) the relation among the heads of executing departments and the chief officer/executive officer, on the one hand, and among themselves, on the other; (c) the nature of control and discipline within municipal administration; and (d) the method of attending to complaints and grievances of citizens who are the ultimate consumers of municipal services. □

# TYPES OF MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL SYSTEMS

Basically there are three types of municipal personnel systems, viz., separate, unified, and integrated.

The first type, a 'separate' personnel system for each municipal body is one in which each municipal body has power to appoint and dismiss its own personnel, and the personnel is not transferable to any other jurisdiction by a central body. The term would apply whether or not each municipality has an organised career service or even a simple merit system.

The second type is a 'unified' municipal personnel system, in which all or certain categories of personnel of municipal bodies form a single career service for the entire state. This municipal service is distinct from the state civil service. Appointment, promotion, transfers, and dismissal of personnel in this statewide municipal service are usually administered by an agency at the state level. Where only certain categories of personnel or certain classes of municipal bodies are included in the unified municipal service, the arrangements for the rest may resemble the separate service, as defined above.

The third type is an 'integrated' national and local personnel system, in which the personnel of the national or state government and those of municipal bodies form parts of the same service, transfers being possible not only between municipalities but also between municipal government and national or state government.

Theoretically speaking, each of these three personnel systems has its own advantages and disadvantages. It would be instructive to analyse the arguments for and against these three types of personnel systems, because such an analysis would help set the theoretical backdrop of evaluating particular municipal personnel systems.

## ADVANTAGES OF SEPARATE PERSONNEL SYSTEM

A separate municipal personnel system has the following

distinctive advantages:

- (a) Municipal bodies have the power needed to ensure the loyalty and effective performance of their employees.
- (b) Employees, when locally recruited, are likely to know the local conditions better and develop more interest in community affairs than would the employees recruited from elsewhere.
- (c) Since the local authority has control over all its staff, there is not the problem of different status for different categories of staff as there often is in other types of personnel systems.
- (d) The opportunities for continuous employment in their own communities may induce some of the talented young persons to seek a career in the service of the local municipal government.
- (e) The separate municipal service is likely to be relatively economical because the compensations for some municipal employees need to be competitive only with other opportunities for employment in the local economy.
- (f) The basic advantage is that a separate system contributes to local 'self-government' by allowing local authorities to exercise power in an important field, *i.e.*, recruitment and management of its own manpower resources.

The realisation of these advantages depends upon the ability of local authorities to introduce other requisites of a sound personnel system within the framework of a separate personnel system. As against these advantages, there are some strong disadvantages of separate municipal personnel system.

#### DISADVANTAGES OF SEPARATE SYSTEM

A separate personnel system has the following disadvantages:

- (a) Left to themselves, local authorities may not be able to fulfil all the requisites of a good personnel system.

Except big municipalities, it may be too much to expect the smaller municipalities to reach *minimum standards* and to attract *competent people*.<sup>1</sup> The catchment area for recruitment and the ability to pay are both restricted in respect of individual municipalities.

- (b) The main disadvantage is that it unduly restricts opportunities for promotion, especially for higher-level officers. Municipal administration usually does not have large number of higher posts. Any brilliant officer employed in the service of a municipality is likely to find that he does not have many higher posts which he could reasonably expect to enjoy during his service career. Frustration resulting from absence of promotion prospects seems to be a strong argument against separate municipal personnel system.
- (c) Since under separate system the personnel recruited by the municipal authority and the personnel recruited are to spend the whole career in the locality, some kind of local vested interests are likely to grow. Moreover, the officers generally are likely to develop some kind of personal allegiance to particular local political leaders. This feeling of personalised allegiance may not allow the municipal officers to discharge their duties in an impartial manner.

#### ADVANTAGES OF UNIFIED PERSONNEL SYSTEM

The idea of unified service involves an area basis for recruitment as wide as the area covered by the unified service. Under unified personnel system, objective criteria and methods are to be applied in recruitment, appointment and promotion. Common conditions of service comparing

<sup>1</sup>Even in the United States, where there has long been a civil service reform movement and where the conditions attached to federal grants-in-aid have encouraged local authorities to establish a merit system, there are still many local authorities that do not have a merit system at all or one that does not cover all employees. (United Nations, *Local Government Personnel Systems*, New York, 1966, p. 10).

favourably with the state services are established. Transfers are made easy between municipalities without any jeopardy to the transferred employee's career or employment rights or the interests of local authorities. The staff is protected against arbitrary disciplinary measures. Provision of pre-entry and post-entry training is to be centrally planned to the needs of the personnel in the unified service.

Its probable advantages are as follows:

- (a) It may facilitate the creation of a national or state-wide career service founded on merit principles.
- (b) It may enable municipalities, especially the smaller ones, to obtain the services of more qualified persons than would be attracted to a separate system.
- (c) It may prevent, or greatly lessen, nepotism and favouritism in appointments and other personnel matters.
- (d) It involves a certain degree of central control over municipal personnel matters but also provides for delegation of personnel functions to municipal authorities to the maximum extent practicable and may facilitate the devolution of development functions to local authorities.
- (e) Responsiveness of employees to local councils may be a problem at the initial stages, but those who make local government service a life-time career are more likely to develop skills and attitudes conducive to sound relationships with their councils.
- (f) Despite the problems connected with it, a unified service nevertheless provides a more rational basis than may otherwise be possible for dealing with municipal government staffing problems.

#### DISADVANTAGES OF UNIFIED SYSTEM

Like its advantages, the disadvantages of unified municipal personnel system are also many and formidable. These are:

- (a) It does not solve all the personnel problems of local authorities. In fact, some new ones may arise because

of the need for trained staff to administer the service; to orient all concerned in the new relationships of personnel, councillors and central agencies concerned; to foster the development of negotiating machinery representative of local authorities and their staffs; and to develop procedures governing personnel actions, standards for job classification and pay scales; disciplinary measures, and other elements involved in a unified service.

- (b) Where unified service covers only a part of the staff, new problems arise in relationships between employees who are in the unified service and those who are not.
- (c) Some of the old staffing problems may persist: for example, shortages of staff, particularly at middle and higher levels due to continued disparities in salary levels between the municipal service and the state service; and lack of promotion opportunities for higher-level officers because there are too few large municipalities which can afford to maintain high-level posts.
- (d) Inadequate funds for training, always a problem, may be aggravated where municipal councils are expected to pay for the training of staff in the unified service.
- (e) Political interference continues to exist, at least from another level.
- (f) There are possibilities of conflict between the unified service agency and municipal councils. The agency's powers over appointment, promotion and discipline weaken somewhat the traditional basis for responsiveness of staff to municipal councils. Members of the unified service are also likely to be confused as to their relationship with their employing authorities and the unified service agency. Where there is a strong desire of municipal councillors to assert their power, officers may be asked to do things that are not allowed under the rules, and the unified service agency may not be able to protect them from attack by councillors.
- (g) A unified service may also raise special problems in

training, e.g. :

- (i) provision of substitute employees to small municipalities to replace persons who may require a long period of training off the job;
- (ii) financing of the training of members of the unified service; and
- (iii) reluctance of local authorities to train persons who are likely to be transferred elsewhere.

#### ADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATED PERSONNEL SYSTEM

An integrated service covering both national/state governments and municipal government is based on merit principles. Its distinctive feature is vertical as well as horizontal transferability of personnel. It has the following advantages:

- (a) It ensures the same salaries, conditions of service, and retirement benefits for civil servants regardless of the level of service.
- (b) It permits the most extensive area basis for recruitment.
- (c) It provides the widest possible career opportunities in public service. It is advantageous to the staff for the greater opportunities it affords, to local authorities for the high quality of personnel it makes available to them, and to all levels of government and the nation as a whole for the understanding of local needs that the staff carry with them to higher levels of government and for the contribution this system makes to national integration.
- (d) It facilitates the estimation of national manpower needs and the organisation of educational and training programmes to meet them.
- (e) It facilitates the optimal use of trained personnel and permits the use of centralised personnel services and uniformity in personnel rules and practices to the extent advisable.
- (f) It facilitates the decentralisation of development functions and thereby increases the participation of



the people in the administration of those functions. Where there is a shortage of qualified municipal personnel, competent community leaders and experienced councillors, an integrated service facilitates the rational distribution of qualified staff and therefore the use of local government to foster social and economic development.

- (g) It gives the central/state government a greater stake in the improvement of living conditions in small towns and rural areas in order to make life there more attractive to qualified personnel—and, incidentally, to other residents as well. As a result, it may both accelerate local development and stimulate the growth of local government institutions.
- (h) The staff are more insulated than in other systems from local politics and personal pressures, although they may be less responsive to local elected bodies.

#### DISADVANTAGES OF INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Integrated personnel system suffers from some serious disadvantages from the point of view of municipal government. These are:

- (a) The staff may not be as responsive as they should be to local council.
- (b) The most capable staff are likely to be promoted to higher levels of government just when they acquire the experience needed to deal effectively with complex local government problems.
- (c) The personnel system is geared to meet central government needs; as a consequence, the distinctive elements of local government personnel administration, including special requirements in classification, examination and training, may not be met.
- (d) The danger of excessive centralisation of authority with its resultant delays and lack of adaptation to local needs would be ever present.

cillors and the staff belonging to integrated service. Of course, suitable training can be organised to rectify this disadvantage, or even joint training of elected and permanent officials may be tried. ☐

## MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL PRACTICES AND THINKING IN INDIA : AN OVERVIEW

Municipal government in modern India is more than a century old. It is surprising, however, that there has been little conscious efforts to study the problems of municipal personnel administration and to make changes in it. Lack of any political will to strengthen municipal government and also administrative inertia seem to be responsible for the neglect in studying municipal personnel problems.

Municipal personnel practices in different states in India show wide variations. All the three types of municipal personnel systems, viz., separate, unified, and integrated can be found in one state or another throughout India. At present none of these systems has been adopted in its entirety in any state in India. Historically speaking, most of the states had separate municipal personnel systems. Since independence many states have either adopted, or have provided in their respective municipal legislations for the introduction of, a unified personnel system to cover the higher echelons of municipal services. Some states have also been partially following an integrated system in managing their municipal personnel system.

In the matter of municipal personnel practices in India, one can talk of three models. The first model may be called the Tamil Nadu model wherein the officers serving municipal government are transferable horizontally between municipalities and also vertically between national, state, and municipal government. This model has been adopted in all the southern states, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh. In these states the integration between the state service and municipal service has taken place upto the level of departmental heads; the lower grades of municipal posts are, however, manned by locally recruited people.

After independence Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have constituted state cadres of municipal services controlled by the state government. This is the second model in which

municipal services have been unified theoretically upto the supervisory and clerical levels, but the lowest level employees continue to be separately recruited and controlled at the municipal level. In Punjab and Haryana also this model is followed.

The third model can be prominently noticed in West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. In these states municipal authorities enjoy exclusive competence to recruit and manage their own personnel. Generally in these states rules are framed by the state government to control certain aspects of the management of municipal personnel, but in hiring and firing their personnel these municipalities enjoy full authority.

#### DECENTRALISATION COMMISSION (1907-08)

The problem of municipal personnel first received a marginal consideration from the Decentralisation Commission (1907-08) which considered the entire subject of local self-government. It recommended that the appointment of municipal secretaries or other chief executive officers, engineers and health officers of municipalities should require the sanction of provincial government in case of cities and of divisional commissioner in case of other small municipalities. It also recommended that the same sanction would be necessary for alteration in the emoluments for their post, and for their appointment and dismissal. The commission proposed that the provincial government should lay down for municipal boards general rules in respect of such matters as leave, travelling allowance, pensions or provident funds, and maximum salaries; sanction should also be required for any deviation therefrom. The Government of India subsequently accepted that outside sanction would be required for appointment or dismissal of municipal secretaries, engineers and health officers. Even accepting a separate municipal personnel system, some kind of vital controls over personnel was insisted upon for achieving a minimum standard of efficiency and guarding against misuse of powers by municipal bodies.

#### OFFICIAL COMMITTEES/FORUMS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

The different weaknesses of municipal personnel admini-

nistration have till now received marginal attention of certain official forums and committees. The first conference of the state ministers in charge of local self-government adopted in 1948 the following resolution:

In view of the fact that provincial cadre will facilitate recruitment of suitable personnel from a wide field and provide a more efficient and contented service, this conference is of opinion that there should be provincial cadres for the higher executive and technical staff employed by local bodies.

The second conference (1954) of the LSG ministers again resolved that the most important posts in local bodies should be centralised on a statewide basis and should be transferable.

The Central Council of Local Self-Government (it has recently been renamed Central Council for Local Government and Urban Development) also supported the proposal of creating state-cadres of municipal services in 1956, 1959, and 1960. This Council, in conjunction with the Fourth Conference of Ministers of Town and Country Planning held in 1963 adopted the following resolution:

The conference having considered the need for improving the efficiency and standard of municipal services reiterate the recommendation to all the state governments to provincialise administrative, health, engineering and town planning services of the municipalities in the interest of better and more efficient administration.

The Conference of Municipal Corporations held in 1959 and 1964 adopted similar resolutions to urge upon the state governments to provincialise the key posts in municipal administration.

#### UN STUDY (1966)

A United Nations study laid the following principal

features of a good local government personnel system:<sup>1</sup>

- (a) Posts in local government must be comparable in attractiveness of posts in states and central government or in the private sector if they are to interest qualified persons. This includes pay, working conditions, prestige, prospects and security.
- (b) Selection should be based on merit as determined, as far as practicable, by competitive or qualifying examinations with due consideration of the integrity and character of the candidate. Prejudices and pressures, both national and local, should be eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum. There should be no requirement of local residence for posts requiring professional or technical preparation. Recruitment should be so phased that new entrants to service can be duly trained and are ready to enter duty when needed avoiding hasty filling of vacancies.
- (c) There should be a career service providing reasonable prospects for promotion on merit and seniority. The employees should be protected against victimisation resulting from political, social and ethnic pressures. This will foster satisfaction and loyalty in the service and free the elected councils from embarrassment of dispensing favours and imposing penalties in personnel matters.
- (d) It may be necessary for officers to be subject to transfer. In addition to widening the experience of officers, such mobility would benefit the local authorities. Senior officers in local government exercise great influence in policy-making; for them to have served different local authorities is a valuable asset to their employers. Ease of transfer may avoid the necessity of termination when an officer is unable, for personal reasons, to work well with a particular chairman, mayor or council. Moreover, smaller municipalities in remote

<sup>1</sup>United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Public Administration Branch, *Local Government Personnel Systems*, New York, 1966.

corners of the state may have difficulty in recruiting qualified officers. The system of transfer may help such authorities in obtaining the services of qualified officers. Transfers, however, should not be too frequent as to prevent officers from gaining knowledge of local conditions and applying it for a reasonable period. The special personal problems of officers, if any, should also be considered before enforcing transfers.

- (e) Officers should be afforded opportunities for in-service training to render their best service in a post and to qualify for more responsible posts. While local authorities should perhaps help meet training costs, training should be planned and executed on a national or statewide basis.
- (f) As a matter of public duty the local government officer should be loyal to the authorities he serves. This is not to be interpreted as requiring his approval of whatever policy the council adopts, while it is the officer's duty normally to implement policies. The officer should give honest advice. Courageous counsel, though often embarrassing and difficult to give, is necessary, and the officer should be protected against any adverse effects.
- (g) The officer should be responsive to his council and be induced to give his best service to the local authority and the people through a system of checks and suitable action against an officer who "does not pull his weight". There should be regular system of reporting on the officer's work and conduct through supervisory channels, made available to the authority that considers promotion, transfer and dismissal from service.
- (h) The right of association of employees is to be recognised and measures should be taken to encourage extensive utilisation of consultative procedures (or collective bargaining procedures, where appropriate) in respect of conditions of employment, safety and health, recruitment, promotion and training.

RURAL-URBAN RELATIONSHIP COMMITTEE (1966)

The first official committee which made some serious study of municipal administration was the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee (RURC) which reported in 1966. The RURC found that "the limited practice of having common cadres for the state and local authorities for the superior executive and technical services has, on the whole, worked well".<sup>2</sup> The RURC clearly stated its preference for an integrated municipal personnel system for the executive and technical posts in municipalities, because the statewide unified cadre for municipal administration would not be able to attract properly qualified persons. It argued:

'As the requirements of municipalities for public health, medical, and engineering services are small and the opportunities for promotion limited, the unified system of services for these posts is not likely to attract suitable persons. Moreover, there is scarcity of trained and experienced persons for the technical posts.' If the duties, qualifications and scales of pay could be the same in the state as well as the municipal service, the committee recommended that 'it will be more convenient and advantageous to have a combined integrated service for public health engineers, town planners, and medical and health officers.'<sup>3</sup>

The RURC further recommended the formation of an integrated Municipal Accounts Service, which would be common to state and municipal governments to include posts of accountants and auditors in municipalities and corporations and the state government's department of the Examiner of Local Fund Accounts. The committee visualised splitting up of such a service into two grades, viz.: (a) accountant and audit assistant (class II), and (b) accounts officers and auditors (class I).<sup>4</sup>

So far as the administrative and revenue services of

<sup>2</sup>*Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee (RURC), 1966, Vol. I, para 8.08, p. 76.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, para 8.11, p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, para 8.12, p. 77.



municipal bodies are concerned, the RURC preferred unified cadre of administrative officers, revenue officers, and assessment officers for municipal bodies. It argued:

The administrative and revenue services of municipal bodies stand as a different category, as they require a special type of knowledge and expertise different from that required for work in departments of the state government. The requirement of these services are fairly big and there would be scope for different grades of services and creation of opportunities of promotion within the services.<sup>5</sup>

The committee therefore felt that the formation of a unified cadre of municipal officers would better serve the interests of municipal administration. As there are municipal bodies of different sizes and grades, it would be necessary to classify administrative and revenue posts to suit the requirements of such bodies. The RURC recommended the classification of such posts under special grade, grade I, and grade II.

The RURC found that the formation of statewide cadres for certain categories of officers was the only solution to the problem of attracting proper personnel for municipal service. The unfettered right of municipal bodies to appoint and remove their employees was seen by the committee to have seriously undermined the efficiency of municipal administration. In turn, inefficient municipal administration has been generally made a pretext for state governments taking over more of local functions in the fields of education, health, urban development and public works. The RURC therefore strongly opined:

If the local bodies are to ensure a steady flow of qualified and competent personnel for their technical and administrative posts, they obviously cannot have any more freedom of choice in the selection and appointment of personnel than what is available to departments of the Union and

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the RURC, op. cit.*, Vol. I, para 8.13, p. 77.

the State Governments.<sup>6</sup>

The committee favoured a combination of direct recruitment and promotion from lower grades on merit. In order to bolster up the morale and promotion prospects of municipal officers, it recommended that unified state-cadre of municipal services should be recognised as one of the feeders for appointment to the posts of municipal commissioners and other senior posts.<sup>7</sup>

The RURC's inquiries and treatment of the municipal personnel problem were wide-ranging and its recommendations were clear and straightforward. Before the views of the RURC could be thoroughly considered by the union and state governments, another official committee addressed itself on the system of municipal personnel administration.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE SERVICE CONDITIONS OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES (1968)

The executive committee of the Central Council of Local Self-Government appointed in 1965 a committee to consider the question of improvement of service conditions of municipal employees. The committee's Report, submitted in November 1967, was published in 1968.

From a review of the relationship between state government and municipal bodies in India, the Committee found that it was not unusual for the state government, while giving grants or even loans, to lay down that specific works would have to be executed through departments and agencies of the state government, and municipal bodies would have to pay some charges to these executing agencies. Even then municipal bodies could no more than protest against any delay in the execution of the works in which they were keenly interested but which generally received a very low place in the order of priorities of the executing departments of the state government. The only alternative to this arrangement, in the opinion of the committee, appeared to be the strengthening of municipal personnel system so that municipal bodies could be

<sup>6</sup>*Report of the RURC, op. cit.*, Vol. I, para 8.06, p. 74.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, para 8.15, p. 78.

equipped for the discharge of all their duties connected with development and maintenance of urban services.

The committee emphasised the point that local government being included in the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, municipal bodies cannot claim absolute autonomy and exclusive rights to appoint their own employees. After considering the two points relating to municipal autonomy and the capability of municipal bodies to bear the expenditures necessary for paying for the state-level personnel working in municipalities, the committee came to the definite conclusion that it would be desirable to constitute statewide cadres of municipal employees.

It expressed its strong view that it would not be possible to tone up municipal administrative machinery and to ensure proper enforcement of municipal rules and bye-laws without encadring the subordinate managerial and inspector level staff. Hence it recommended comprehensive statewide cadres for municipal personnel. The committee also preferred the creation of a separate accounts service for municipal bodies.

Like the RURC, this committee also visualised that ultimately integrated personnel system for serving both state government and municipal bodies would be better. "The ultimate objective", argued the committee, "should be to integrate municipal services with corresponding categories of state services in order to ensure that the personnel available for municipal employment would have the desired competence and prestige enjoying appropriate conditions of service".<sup>8</sup>

So far as unified statewide cadres are concerned, the committee preferred recruitment through State Public Service Commission. This procedure appeared to be both convenient and advantageous, as such a procedure would place the matter outside the range of legal controversies and would at the same time give to the municipal cadres "a status and a prestige comparable to those of the purely state government cadres". Moreover, it was argued that "selection by the State Public Service Commission will help in promoting

<sup>8</sup>*Report of the Committee on the Service Conditions of Municipal Employees, Government of India, Ministry of Health, Family Planning*

integration of state and municipal service at any stage desired in future.”<sup>9</sup> This procedure was considered helpful for opening the possibilities of the incumbents in municipal cadres competing with government servants for comparable posts in state governments to be filled in consultation with Public Service Commission.

Not many concrete measures were taken at the state level after the recommendations of these two official committees were known. The importance of municipal personnel problem was again underlined by a Task Force of the union government in the late seventies when the government began to think about developing the small and medium towns and cities in order to reverse the population drift towards big cities.

#### TASK FORCE ON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL & MEDIUM TOWNS AND CITIES (1977)

The Task Force on Planning and Development of Small and Medium Towns and Cities, appointed in 1975 by the union ministry of works and housing, which reported in early 1977.

The problem of municipal personnel administration was not its focus but its Report<sup>10</sup> incidentally touched upon this issue while discussing the general problem of urban management. The Task Force found that the real deficiency lies at the level of supervisory staff, and that the most distressing aspect of municipal administration is its dependence on state-level administrative and technical personnel. The capital works of municipalities are generally carried out by state government agencies which do not accord priority to municipal works and are in no way answerable to the municipal authorities. The Task Force rightly noted that “the unfortunate long-term result of this system is that municipal officials at senior levels not only do not grow in their competence but are unprepared to shoulder responsibility”. It also opined

<sup>9</sup>*Report of the Committee on the Service Conditions of Municipal Employees, op. cit.*, para 4.11.

<sup>10</sup>Government of India, Ministry of Works and Housing, *Report of the Task Force on Planning and Development of Small & Medium Towns*

that unified municipal cadre is definitely helpful to place the services of qualified technical and administrative personnel within the reach of local bodies. But the Task Force did not go into details of the problems connected with the management of municipal personnel, but it could realise that the management and organisation of the statewide cadres require to be streamlined, particularly in the matter of transfer and posting of the concerned personnel and their accountability to municipal authorities.

The problem of municipal personnel, again, received some attention from two official bodies at the beginning of the eighties.

#### STUDY GROUP ON CONSTITUTION, POWERS AND LAWS OF URBAN LOCAL BODIES AND MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS (1983)

This Study Group on Constitution, Powers and Laws of the Urban Local Bodies and Municipal Corporations was the first of the four study groups which were appointed by the union ministry of works and housing in 1981 in pursuance of a resolution of the eighteenth meeting of the Central Council for Local Government and Urban Development. Apart from officials of the union and some state governments, two mayors of municipal corporation and three academics were involved in finalising its recommendations.<sup>11</sup> Among many other things, this Study Group considered the issue of municipal personnel system. It suggested that while creation of posts should be done by municipal authorities, appointments should be done through a variety of means: class I posts should follow the rules of relevant state cadre, class II posts are to be filled on the basis of selection by the state public service commission, while municipal authorities are to appoint persons in the remaining class III and class IV posts. Appointees in class II posts would belong to a state cadre of municipal functionaries to be administered by the state director of

<sup>11</sup>Government of India, Ministry of Works and Housing, *Report of the Study Group on Constitution, Powers and Laws of the Urban Local Bodies and Municipal Corporations*, New Delhi, 1983.

municipal administration. It was further suggested that there would be a promotion quota for class I posts, but essentially these posts are to be manned by state officials on deputation, as in the case of most municipal corporations. That is to say, the class I posts would be mostly reserved for state employees belonging to an integrated cadre, the class II posts would be reserved for state appointees to a unified cadre, while the remaining employees belonging to class III and class IV cadres would belong to separate cadres controlled by municipal bodies.

This arrangement was expected to bring uniformity between municipal corporations and municipalities so far as staffing is concerned. But it remains a matter of speculation whether municipal corporations would accept the role of the state director in respect of their personnel matters or whether the top municipal staff belonging to the integrated cadre would have the necessary orientation in municipal administration.

#### TASK FORCE ON MANAGEMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (1983)

The Task Force on Management of Urban Development was one of the four task forces appointed by the Planning Commission, whose report<sup>12</sup> came out towards the end of 1983. The problems of municipal personnel were expectedly studied by this Task Force which found that personnel development has been the weakest aspect of urban management in India and viewed the development of a sound municipal personnel system as one of the critical issues of urban management.

The Task Force has suggested the formation of state cadres for key positions in municipal management like chief officer, engineer, accounts officer, revenue officer, and health officer. The Task Force seems to believe that this system, if adopted, would help improve the crucial management capability of municipal bodies and that separate personnel system would be of greater advantage in respect of the lower levels of municipal management personnel.

<sup>12</sup>Government of India, Planning Commission, *Report of Task Force on Management of Urban Development*, New Delhi, September, 1983.

The Task Force also noted the existence of an obvious gap in respect of the training needs of the technical or para-professional personnel engaged in urban management. Proper assessment of training needs of the urban management personnel has, therefore, been considered another critical issue of urban management.

The Task Force has not however provided any empirical evidence to support its preference for state cadres of municipal personnel. The arguments used by it are theoretical and based on certain presuppositions favouring its own preference for unified municipal personnel system. Had it considered the real experiences of the states practising unified municipal personnel system, it would have found it difficult to recommend unified personnel system in municipal administration. Moreover, the Task Force has completely ignored the bigger, issue namely, how the introduction of unified municipal personnel system would affect the loyalty of the state-cadre municipal officers to elected municipal councils and their commitment to exercise local discretion and choice in the matter of planning and development of their areas.

#### A REVIEW

This review of the official thinking, from time to time, about municipal personnel system in India shows that there has been a persistent emphasis on creating statewide unified municipal personnel system. The RURC and the Committee on Service Conditions of Municipal Employees went further to recommend the integration of higher level municipal personnel with state government personnel as the ultimate goal. But all these recommendations have not been based on any empirical field study about how the municipal personnel systems in different states are actually functioning. An attempt will now be made in the following two chapters to present the findings of the field study on municipal personnel systems as actually working in Rajasthan and Gujarat. □

# MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL SYSTEMS IN RAJASTHAN AND GUJARAT: GENERAL OUTLINE

## THE RAJASTHAN SYSTEM

The state of Rajasthan was created as a result of amalgamation of a large number of princely states in the region. All these states had their own system of administering their urban areas. Hence when, in the wake of the reorganisation of states in India, Rajasthan became a constituent state, it felt the need for introducing a uniform system of urban government as far as possible. The personnel practices of different urban local bodies in the matters of recruitment, appointment, salaries and wages, promotion and discipline used to vary in different parts of the state. The disadvantages of separate personnel system were glaring in municipal administration and the newly-created state of Rajasthan decided to enact a comprehensive municipal legislation.

The Rajasthan Municipalities Act (1959) marked an important landmark in the system of municipal administration in the state. In some other states of India, such as, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala there had been a tradition of unified municipal service. This Act of 1959 established a unified municipal service in Rajasthan. The predominant considerations for unified municipal services seem to be three: first, it would create more promotion opportunities for officers, and help remove stagnation and consequent frustration in municipal services; secondly, it would bring in professionalism in municipal services and attract better calibre to municipal service; and thirdly, it would help fight against corruptions and nepotism which are long known to be ingrained in municipal administration in India. Along with this reform in municipal personnel system came other consequential changes in the system of state assistance to municipal bodies and the state government's control over them.



For the purpose of constituting the statewide cadre of municipal service, the municipalities in Rajasthan are now classified into four categories on the basis of income and population with effect from the middle of 1960 under section 303 (1) of the Rajasthan Municipalities Act of 1959:<sup>1</sup>

- Class I Municipalities in the state's capital city and in other cities and towns with a population of 50,000 and above;
- Class II Municipalities in the district headquarter towns, and other municipalities having a population between 25,000 and 50,000, and an annual income of Rs. 2 lakhs and above;
- Class III Municipalities having a population between 15,000 and 25,000 and an annual income between Rs. 1 lakh and 2 lakhs; municipalities having a per capita income of Rs. 25 may be promoted to class II.
- Class IV Municipalities having a population between 8,000 and 15,000 and an annual income between Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 40,000.

The Class I municipalities are called 'municipal councils' and the others are called 'municipal boards'.

#### *Categories of Municipal Services*

Municipal services have been grouped into three categories in Rajasthan, viz.:

- (a) Rajasthan Municipal Service (RMS) to which belong both the generalist administrative officers and the technical officers;
- (b) Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate and Ministerial Service; and
- (c) Rajasthan Municipal Class IV Service.

The recruitment, promotion, disciplinary control and other service matters in respect of the above services are regulated

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* Government Notification No. Tax F-6 (Misc.) DLE/72/9563-9582, dated February 8, 1973.

by separate rules, for example: (a) Rajasthan Municipal Service Rules, 1963, (b) Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate and Ministerial Service Rules, 1963; and (c) Rajasthan Municipal Class IV Service Rules, 1964.

### *Coverage of Municipal Services*

On the administrative side, commissioners of class I municipalities, executive officers of classes II, III and IV municipalities, and secretaries of class I municipalities belong to the Rajasthan Municipal Service. Under the Act of 1959, the state government has to appoint: (i) a commissioner for every municipal council, (ii) an executive officer for every municipal board, and (iii) a secretary for every municipal council which resolves to appoint a secretary in addition to the commissioner, and for every municipal board for which no executive officer is appointed. The total strength of various categories of administrative officers in the RMS is fixed by the state government from time to time.

On the technical side, the following categories of posts belong to RMS:

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| (a) Revenue     | Revenue officer (grade I) who is equivalent to EO of class II municipality.  |
| (b) Engineering | Executive engineer (civil), assistant engineer (civil), junior engineer (civil), assistant engineer (mechanical), junior engineer (mechanical), assistant engineer (electrical), and junior engineer (electrical). |
| (c) Health      | Health officer (grade I), health officer (grade II), and medical officer.  |
| (d) Accounts    | Accounts officer, assistant accounts officer.  |
| (e) Legal       | Law officer.   |
| (f) Others      | Fire-fighting officer and statistician.  |

The total strength of the various categories of technical officers in RMS is fixed by the state government from time to time.

The Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate and Ministerial

Service consists of the following categories of posts:

*Subordinate Service*

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| (a) Revenue      | Assessor, tax/revenue/octroi inspectors, assistant tax/revenue/octroi inspectors, nakedar/moharrir ( <i>i.e.</i> municipal clerk dealing with octroi), sub-nakedar/naib moharrir, chief sanitary inspector. |
| (b) Health       | Sanitary/food inspectors, assistant sanitary inspector, head vaccinator, compounder/junior nurse/midwife and vaidya (grades I and II).  |
| (c) Legal        | Pairakar (municipal prosecutor) (classes I and II).   |
| (d) Public works | Overseer (classes I and II), draftsman/surveyor.  |
| (e) Motor garage | Garages superintendent and mechanic.  |
| (f) Others       | Light inspector, assistant light inspector, assistant fire-fighting officer, tindal/leading fireman, and fireman.   |

*Ministerial Service*

(i) Office superintendent, (ii) head clerk, (iii) upper division clerk, (iv) lower division clerk, (v) stenographer, senior and junior, (vi) stenotypist, (vii) accountant (grades I and II) (viii) internal auditor, and (ix) time-keeper.

The strength of the various categories of posts in the subordinate and ministerial service has to be fixed by the respective municipal councils/boards from time to time with the prior approval of the state government.

The Rajasthan Municipal class IV service consists of about forty categories of posts listed in the schedule attached to the Rajasthan Municipal Class IV Service Rules, 1964. It includes posts like fitter, turner, blacksmith, carpenter, mason, daftri, gardener, peon, farrash, chowkidar, naka guard, cleaner, jamadar, sweeper, etc. The strength of the different categories of posts in the class IV service is fixed by each municipal council/board with the approval of the state government from time to time.

## Recruitment

The administrative and technical posts belonging to RMS are filled by direct recruitment and through promotion on 50:50 basis. The State Public Service Commission is responsible for making direct recruitments to RMS. The promotions to RMS, on the other hand, are the responsibility of a Promotion Committee made up of : (1) the state government's secretary to the Department of Local Self-Government as chairman, (2) Director of Local Bodies and *ex officio* deputy secretary to the state government as a member, and (3) a representative of the Appointments Department as a member. The appointing authority is the state government in respect of municipal commissioners (class I) and executive officers of class II and class III municipal boards. Executive officers of class IV municipalities are appointed by the director of local bodies. The career for the newly recruits to RMS begins as executive officer of class IV municipalities, and thereafter all higher posts in the RMS are filled up by promotion.

A separate commission is responsible for direct recruitment to the posts in the subordinate and ministerial service. So far as recruitment for municipal administration is concerned, a separate commission known as Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate Service Commission was to be formed, but till now it is the same body as Rajasthan Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Services Commission (PSZPSC) so far as membership is concerned.<sup>2</sup> The appointing authority of the direct recruits and promotees to the subordinate and ministerial service is the municipal executive concerned. Only in the case of appointment of assessors, the approval of the state government is necessary.

Recruitment for the municipal class IV service is entirely the responsibility of the municipal executive which is also the appointing authority. Such recruitments are made from a panel of names sent by the local employment exchange or by promotion from existing casual employees.

<sup>2</sup>The Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads Service Commission (PSZPSC) was constituted in 1959 by the state government initially for the purposes of managing panchayati raj services. After the enforcement of Municipal Service Rule in 1963, it was also assigned the function of recruitment of municipal subordinate and ministerial service personnel. The secretariat staff of the PSZPSC is divided into two wings: one dealing with the work of panchayati raj services and another

## *Transfer*

The appointing authorities are generally empowered to transfer members of the staff. The RMS officers are transferred in more than one ways. The transfer of these officers belonging to class I and class II municipalities is decided by the minister. The transfer to other officers of RMS are theoretically to be decided by the Director of Local Bodies, but in practice all these transfers are influenced by the minister. The frequency of transfer is not limited by any provision in the rules, but transfers are to be normally made after two to three years of service in a particular municipality.

The personnel in the subordinate and ministerial service are theoretically transferable; there is a provision to that effect in the Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate and Ministerial Service Rules, 1963. Such transfers may be effected in the same grade and category by the Director of Local Bodies as and when considered necessary for the efficiency of the service. In the context of each municipality being the appointing and controlling authority of its subordinate and ministerial staff, the provision of transfer made in the Rules (1963) does not seem very clear. It is understood that no such transfer has, in practice, been effected so far. Members of class IV service cannot be transferred from one municipality to another.

The municipal personnel of all categories retain all their rights and privileges when they are transferred from one municipality to another, and are reimbursed for the actual costs incurred while shifting their residence. The officer concerned suffers no dislocation or harassment in carrying with him his last pay certificate, leave account and provident fund passbook. The process of transfer is, more or less, smooth.

## *Promotion*

Promotion to the RMS is made strictly on the basis of seniority-cum-merit. Some of the posts are filled on the basis of promotion alone, while others are filled by direct recruitment as well as by promotion in a 50:50 ratio. While selecting candidates for promotion, their academic and technical qualifications, experience, tact, initiative, energy, intelligence, ability, character, and record of previous service are to be taken into account.

After a decision is taken about the number of posts to be filled up by promotion, the Director of Local Bodies prepares a panel of eligible persons. Along with confidential reports and personal files, the panel is forwarded to the secretary of the Local Self-Government department of the state government, who in turn fixes the dates for the meeting of the Promotion Committee for interviewing the candidates. After the interview is held, the committee prepares an eligibility list of selected candidates in order of seniority in the service. The list then comes to the Director of Local Bodies.

This method of promotion on seniority-cum-merit basis places considerable weight on seniority. It does not seem to be an effective promotion method, particularly for higher level personnel. The basis of seniority has the advantage of simplicity of operation, but it detracts from the values of calibre and competence. Whenever academic/professional qualifications do not appear to have been taken into consideration for promotion purposes, the usual official justification has been that merit/qualification cannot be the sole consideration for promotion.<sup>3</sup>

Recruitment by promotion for posts in the subordinate and ministerial service is made by a Promotion Board in each district of the state, which is composed of the district collector (or additional collector), the treasury officer of the district, a representative of the Director of Local Bodies, and the president of the concerned municipal council/board. As is the present practice, it is almost impossible to recruit a person at the subordinate level of municipal services from outside the town, partly because recruitment from outside is resisted by the elected head of the municipality who sits on the selection commission and promotion board.

The elected municipal leaders do not appear to be fully reconciled to the present selection practices as they yearn to retain in their hands the powers of recruitment and promotion of subordinate and ministerial personnel.<sup>4</sup> At a conference

<sup>3</sup>P.S. Verma and Ramesh K. Arora, "Some Aspects of Personnel Administration at the Municipal Level in Rajasthan", in A.P. Padhi (ed.), *Personnel System of Urban Local Bodies in India*, Agra, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, 1977.

<sup>4</sup>SOURCE: Field Investigation.

of the presidents and chairmen of municipal bodies of Rajasthan, held at Jaipur in April 1973, these elected representatives resolved to abolish the powers of the PSZPSC over recruitment and promotion of municipal personnel in the subordinate and ministerial cadre.<sup>5</sup>

The administration of the unified municipal service has been entrusted with the Director of Local Bodies (DLB) who has been made an *ex officio* deputy secretary to the state government. This post of DLB has been reserved for the selection grade officers of the state-level Rajasthan Administrative Service (RAS). Located at the state capital (Jaipur), the DLB is assisted by four Regional Assistant Directors of Local Bodies posted at Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Bikaner. These regional assistant directors belong to the junior scale of Rajasthan Administrative Service.

### *Disciplinary Control*

Uniform rules of discipline apply to all categories of municipal personnel in Rajasthan. The administrative and technical staff of the RMS are under the disciplinary authority of the state government subject only to consultations with the state public service commission. However, the municipal council/board may discipline all other personnel subject to the rules adopted by the council/board. All disciplinary actions are subject to appeals to the next higher administrative levels.

In the case of officers encadred in the RMS, all disciplinary control vests in the state government. But on all disciplinary matters affecting the service, consultation with the state public service commission is obligatory. The municipal council/board may also punish any officer otherwise than by dismissal or removal by adopting a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total number of its members at a special general meeting and approved by the state government.

The personnel appointed in the subordinate and ministerial

<sup>5</sup>Rajasthan Swayat Shasan (Monthly), June 1973, p. 10 quoted in P.S. Verma and Ramesh K. Arora, "Some Aspects of Personnel Administration at the Municipal Level in Rajasthan", in A.P. Padhi (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 93.

service and in the municipal class IV service are under the control and supervision of the president of the council/board concerned. The employees who belong to these two services may be dismissed, removed or otherwise punished in accordance with rules by the appointing authority which is the municipal council/board.

In the case of subordinate-ministerial and class IV personnel the right of appeal against disciplinary action within the prescribed time-limit lies to the state government if the order is passed by a council/board, or to the council/board if such order is passed by the municipal commissioner or the president of municipal council/board.

#### *Salary Scales and Liability of Payment*

Persons appointed in the RMS are to receive their pay, allowances and other compensations from the Municipal Fund and not from the Consolidated Fund of the state or any common fund separately constituted for the purpose. They are to subscribe to the contributory provident fund to which contribution is made by the municipal council/board they serve as per the rules laid down by the state government.

As for the persons appointed in the Rajasthan subordinate and ministerial service and in Rajasthan municipal class IV service, the liability with regard to salary and other allowances and payments rests wholly with the respective council/board under whom they serve. The rules provide for contributory provident fund to all such employees.

From time to time the state government issues notification prescribing the scales of pay applicable to all categories of municipal personnel in the RMS, in the subordinate and ministerial service, and in class IV service.

As per the latest revision of pay-scales effected in 1981, the following scales now prevail:

Municipal commissioner	Rs. 1000-30-1300-40-1500-50-1800-60-1860
Health officer	-do-
Accounts officer	-do-
Assistant engineer	-do-
Executive engineer	Rs. 1500-50-1800-60-2100-75
	2250



Revenue officer (grade I)	Rs. 820-20-900-25-1000-30 1300-40-1500-50-1550
Executive officer (class II)	-do-
Secretary (municipal council)	-do-
Revenue officer (grade II)	Rs. 640-20-900-25-1000-30- 1100
Executive officer (class III)	-do-
Junior engineer	-do-
Overseer	-do-
Computer/estimator	-do-
Assessor	-do-
Executive officer (class IV)	Rs. 520-10-550-15-640-20- 900-25-925
Surveyor	-do-
Draftsman	-do-
Upper division clerk	-do-
Lower division clerk	Rs. 490-10-550-15-640-20- 840
Chief sanitary inspector	Rs. 740-20-900-25-1000-30 1300-40-1420
Sanitary inspector	Rs. 610-15-640-20-900-25- 1000-30-1090
Revenue inspector	-do-
Accountant (grade I)	Rs. 625-15-640-20-900- 25-1000-30-1120
Accountant (grade II)	Rs. 520-10-550-15-640-20- 900-25-925 (plus a special allowance of Rs. 20)

All class IV employees are in the pay-scale of Rs. 350-5-430, but somewhat higher scales have been given to the technical hands in the class IV service, viz., Mistry scale Rs. 420-5-450-10-550-15-640-20-740; and Driver scale: Rs. 490-10-550-15-640-20-840.

These are the scales of pay which have to be given effect to by the employing municipalities, but they are technically

free to pay more to their employees if their finances so permit.

### *Allowances*

The following allowances have also been made permissible to the municipal personnel in Rajasthan:

- (a) *Dearness allowance*: This allowance, primarily meant for helping persons with fixed income against rising prices, has been made permissible at the municipal level at the same rate as is permissible to state government employees from time to time.
- (b) *House rent allowance*: This allowance is permissible at the same rate as applicable in the case of the state government employees from time to time.
- (c) *Medical allowance*: Rs. 30 per month (consolidated).
- (d) *City allowance*: It is permissible to the municipal personnel employed in cities and towns of over 100,000 population.
- (e) *Livery allowance*: Most of the class IV employees and some employees in the subordinate service being on outdoor duty are given standard liveries as per rules laid down by the state government's notifications from time to time.
- (f) *Conveyance allowance*: It is admissible to every municipal officer and employee on the condition of maintaining motor car/jeep, motor cycle/scooter/autocycle and bicycle as per rules laid down by state government notification, and the rate varies from Rs. 250 to Rs. 15 per month according to the grade enjoyed by the officer/employee.
- (g) *Jharu-Tokra allowance*: The sweepers receive broom and other tools for their work.

### *Qualifications*

Minimum qualifications required for direct recruitment and minimum experience needed for promotion are laid down by the municipal service rules through state government notification.

The following posts in the Rajasthan Municipal Service are filled up 100 per cent on promotion, viz., municipal comm is-

sioner of class I municipalities, executive officers of class II municipalities, secretaries of class I municipalities, executive officers of class III municipalities, revenue officers (grade I), executive engineers, accounts officers, assistant accounts officers, and fire officers. The minimum experience needed are as follows:

Municipal commissioner	5 years' experience as executive officer (class II) or as municipal secretary.
Executive officer (class II) or municipal secretary	5 years' experience as E.O. (class III) or revenue officer (grade I).
Executive officer (class III)	5 years' experience as E.O., (class IV) or revenue officer (grade II) or assessor or office superintendent.
Revenue officer (grade I)	5 years' experience as R.O. (grade II) or E.O. (class IV) or assessor or office superintendent.
Executive engineer	5 years' experience as assistant engineer.
Accounts officer	5 years' experience as assistant accounts officer.
Assistant accounts officer	5 years' experience as accountant (grade I) with graduate qualification.
Fire officer	5 years' experience as assistant fire officer.

Some other posts in the RMS are filled up partially by promotion and partially by direct recruitment. For instance:

Assistant engineer	50 per cent by direct recruitment, 25 per cent by promotion from the cadre of junior engineers, 25 per cent by promotion from the cadre of
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Law officer	50 per cent by direct recruitment, 50 per cent by promotion from the cadre of paio-kar (gr. I) with law graduate qualification.
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Still other posts in the RMS are filled up 100 per cent by direct recruitment on the basis of minimum qualifications as follows:

Executive officer (class IV)	Graduate.
Revenue officer (grade II)	Commerce graduate.
Accounts officer (grade II)	Commerce graduate.
Junior engineer	3 years' diploma or degree in engineering from a recognised institution or diploma recognised by the Institution of Engineers.
Health officer	M.B., B.S. (preferably with diploma in Public Health),
Medical officer	M.B., B.S.

In the subordinate and ministerial service also there is a mixed system of direct recruitment and promotion. But here the overwhelming majority of officers and employees come through promotion.<sup>6</sup> For direct recruitment of the posts like assessor, and revenue/tax inspector, graduation in commerce plus LSGD<sup>7</sup> is insisted upon as the minimum qualification; in case of sanitary inspector (grade I), the minimum qualification is graduation plus completion of certificate course for sanitary inspectors;<sup>8</sup> in case of paiokar (class I),

<sup>6</sup>For a detailed list, see Rajasthan Institute of Local Self-Government, Compendium of Rajasthan Municipal Laws (Vol. I), Jaipur 1982, pp. 77-93.

<sup>7</sup>This refers to Local Self-Government Diploma awarded by the Rajasthan Institute of Local Self-Government which is affiliated to All-India Institute of Local Self-Government (Bombay).

<sup>8</sup>This certificate course is conducted by the Rajasthan Institute of

graduation in law with one year's experience at the Bar is necessary; in case of overseer (class I and II) and mechanic, the diploma in engineering is needed. In most other cases, the minimum qualification needed is matriculation. For promotion purposes, the minimum experience needed varies from 3 years to 7 years.

### *Staffing Patterns*

After considering the views of municipal councils and boards, the state government by notifications issued from time to time fixes the strength of the administrative, technical, subordinate and ministerial staff in all classes of municipalities, namely, municipal councils which are class I municipalities and municipal boards of classes II, III, and IV. The strength of staff is said to be determined by keeping in view the existing staff strength in the bigger municipal councils/boards. It remains open to smaller councils/boards to adopt the pattern in such restricted manner as may be considered by them to be expedient keeping in view the workload, financial position and need for economy. But staff requirement is not allowed to be used as a ground for any financial aid from the state government. The commitment of the state government in regard to financial assistance to municipal bodies is to give a grant of Rs. 5 per capita of the total population of a municipality as per the latest census. Current staff strength of municipal councils and boards in Rajasthan as fixed by the state government is as follows:

#### **RMS staff in municipal council (class I municipality):**

1. Administrative : Commissioner (1); and secretary (1), after prior approval of the state government.
2. Technical : Health officer (1); executive engineer (1) for Jaipur and Ajmer only; assistant engineer, civil or mechanical (1), for municipal councils other than Jaipur and Ajmer; assistant engineer (waterworks) (1), with prior approval of the state govern-

ment if the council runs its own waterworks; accounts officer (1); assistant accounts officer (1); revenue officer grade I (1), if municipal income exceeds Rs. 50 lakhs; revenue officer grade II (4)—one for octroi (if income from octroi collection is Rs. 5 lakh and above), one for house tax, one for other revenues (if income from this source is Rs. 4 lakh and above), and one for water-rates (if from this source income is Rs. 5 lakh and above); Statistician (1); and fire officer (1), if fire services are maintained by the municipality.

Staff strength in subordinate and ministerial services in municipal council:

1. Revenue

Assessor (1) for every one lakh population subject to a maximum of three; revenue inspector (4)—one for house tax; one for octroi (one additional for every Rs. 4 lakh), and one for other revenues; nakedar/moharrir (in proportion to income derived from octroi); sub-nakedar/naib moharrir (in proportion to income derived from octroi).

2. Health

Chief sanitary inspector grade I (1), sanitary inspector (1), or assistant sanitary inspector (1), one for every 25 thousand population; and compost inspector (1) if justified by the workload.

3. Legal affairs

Pairokar grade I (1).

4. Public works,  
lighting, garage  
and gardens

Overseer (1); draftsman (1); mistry/surveyor (1); garden supervisor/inspector (1) if municipal expenditure for gardening exceeds Rs. 25,000

- annually; driver/pump operator (1);  
machanic (1), garage superintendent  
(1); and asistant light inspector (1).  
5. Fire-fighting      Assistant fire officer (1).

The staff strength of ministerial personnel is also fixed by the state government. The number of superintendent, head clerk, upper division clerk, lower division clerk, stenotypist, typist, cashier, and such other personnel is determined as per the volume of workload. The state government also fixes by notification the strength of class IV services, mentioning the number of employees permitted to be employed in different sections of municipal administrative machinery, namely, general administration, accounts and establishment, revenue (house tax, octroi, other revenues), public health and sanitation, public works, law, garage and workshop. Even the number of sweepers and jamadars is fixed by the state government on the basis of population to be served.

The details of staff strength for class II, III, and IV municipalities are similarly fixed by the state government.

#### MUNICIPAL BOARD (CLASS II)

##### *RMS Staff*

Executive officer class II (1); revenue officer grade II (1); who is also to work as assessor; junior engineer (1); and health officer grade II (1).

##### *Subordinate and Ministerial Staff*

Revenue inspector (1); nakedar and sub-nakedar (in proportion to income from octroi); sanitary inspector grade II (1) for every 20,000 population, pairokar grade II (1); overseer class I (1); draftsman-cum-surveyor (1); mechanic (1); asstt. fire officer (1); tindal/leading fireman (2); fireman (8); Driver (1); for every vehicle; head clerk (1); accountant grade II (1); UDC (2); LDC (9); and stenotypist (1).

##### *Class IV Staff*

Nakaguard (in proportion to income from octroi); peons (8); chowkidar (2); jamadars and sweepers (in proportion to

population served); and lighting supervisor (on part-time basis).

#### MUNICIPAL BOARD (CLASS III)

##### *RMS Staff*

Executive officer class III (1); revenue officer grade II (1), who is also to work as assessor.

##### *Subordinate and Ministerial Service Staff*

Revenue inspector (1); nakedar and sub-nakedar (in proportion to income from Octroi); sanitary inspector grade II (1), for every 20,000 population; overseer class II (1); head clerk (1); UDC (2); LDC (5); driver (1) for every vehicle.

##### *Class IV Service Staff*

Nakaguard (in proportion to income derived from octroi); peons (5); chowkidar (1); jamadars and sweepers (in proportion to population served).

#### MUNICIPAL BOARD (CLASS IV)

##### *RMS Staff*

Executive officer class IV (1); who is also to work as assessor.

##### *Subordinate and Ministerial Service Staff*

Asst. revenue inspector (1); nakedar and sub-nakedar (in proportion to income derived from octroi); asst. sanitary inspector (1); draftsman-cum-surveyor (1); UDC (1); moharrirs (2); driver (1) for every vehicle.

##### *Class IV Service Staff*

Nakaguard (in proportion to income derived from octroi); peon (3); chowkidar (1); jamadars and sweepers (in proportion to population served).

##### *Training*

In Rajasthan there exists practically no training facility for municipal services, except for the Rajasthan Institute of



Local Self-Government at Jaipur<sup>9</sup>. The finances of the Jaipur Institute are partly met by the trainees themselves and partly by the municipal bodies.

This Institute awards certificate for sanitary inspectors and also a general diploma (LSGD). The diploma and certificate of the Institute have been recognised by the state government and these are given weight in the selection and promotion of candidates for municipal jobs. To encourage municipal employees to go in for such training, one advance increment is granted to those who obtain such diplomas and certificates. During the training period, an employee is granted by the municipality concerned extraordinary non-debitable leave and a monthly stipend upto half of his pay and allowances. Further, the state government has laid down that no executive officer or sanitary inspectors would be confirmed in their posts till they have obtained the LSGD or completed the sanitary inspector's certificate course, as the case may be (Notification No. 3 (8) LSG/60 issued in 1960). It is found that most of the municipal commissioners and executive officers of class II and class III municipalities in Rajasthan have LSGD to their credit.

In Rajasthan the H.C. Mathur Institute of Public Administration, which provides training to state level officials, has not shown any willingness to undertake the task of training the municipal personnel. In fact, owing to its staff and space limitations, it has been disinclined to expand its scope to include the training of municipal officials. But it may be mentioned in this connexion that Rajasthan has extensive institutional arrangements to impart training to their panchayati raj personnel. Perhaps this imbalance in the training arrangements and development of human resources between urban and rural local bodies personnel is not peculiar to Rajasthan alone.

<sup>9</sup>This Institute enjoys affiliation with the All India Institute of Local Self-Government in Bombay which is private registered society constituted in 1927. It offers courses in local and municipal administration leading to Local Self-Government Diploma (LSGD). The Bombay Institute has its branches in some cities in India.

## THE GUJARAT SYSTEM

The municipalities (not municipal corporations) in the state of Gujarat are governed by the Gujarat Municipalities Act, 1963. Prior to this enactment, the municipalities in Gujarat were governed by the relevant legislations which were in force in the old Bombay state and in the erstwhile native states. As a result, Gujarat had municipal bodies with diverse traditions and historical backgrounds. After the formation of the present state of Gujarat in 1960, the need was felt for bringing about a certain degree of uniformity in their working. The Committee for Rationalisation recommended, among other things, the abolition of diverse types of municipal bodies and constitution of municipalities of a uniform type governed by a unified law. Accordingly, the Gujarat Municipalities Act 1963 was made with a view to consolidating and amending the law relating to the municipalities in the state and giving them wider powers in the management of municipal affairs. The Gujarat Municipalities Bill (1963) had a provision for a unified cadre of municipal service in the state. But this provision was dropped at the select committee stage in view of the strong opposition of the municipal authorities. Thus Gujarat still continues to have the tradition of separate personnel system in municipal administration.

The separate municipal personnel system in Gujarat offers a contrast to that of Rajasthan. Till now Gujarat has no unified municipal personnel system. The municipalities there are free to recruit and manage their own personnel subject to some controls exercised by the state government in respect of some senior municipal officers only.

### *Structure of Urban Government*

There are, at present, four types of local government institutions in the urban areas of the state, viz., six municipal corporations in big cities having a population of 3 lakhs and above; fifty-four municipalities in cities and towns having a population between 25,000 and 300,000; one notified area authority in the newly-built state capital of Gandhinagar; and ninety-one nagar panchayats in small towns having a popula-

tion between 10,000 and 25,000. Nagar panchayats are, however, governed by the Gujarat Panchayats Act (1961) and form part of the panchayati raj system; these bodies are directly responsible to their respective zilla panchayats.

The municipality consists of elected councillors elected for a term of five years, whose number varies between 25 and 51 on the basis of population of a municipality.<sup>10</sup> Reservations have been provided for women, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes. The councillors elect the president and vice-president of the municipality from among themselves.

The municipal authorities charged with carrying out the provisions of the Act of 1963 are three:

- (a) the municipality,
- (b) the president; and
- (c) the chief officer.

The municipality is constituted with perpetual succession and a common seal, which may sue and be sued in its corporate name through its chief officer.

### *Personnel System in Municipal Administration*

A municipality is competent to appoint its chief officer, health officer, and the municipal engineer. All these officers can be removed, reduced in rank or suspended only by a resolution passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of the total number of councillors. The Act (1963) has also empowered the state government to require, in its discretion, the removal of these three key municipal functionaries on the recommendation of the municipality concerned. Such recommendation has to be supported by a resolution passed by a majority of the councillors present at a special general meeting of the municipality called for this purpose (section 50).

<sup>10</sup>The range is as follows:

25	councillors	if the population is between	25,000 and	50,000
35	"	"	"	50,000 and 100,000
40	"	"	"	100,000 and 200,000
51	"	"	"	200,000 and 300,000

The Director of Municipalities, a state government functionary under the Act of 1963, has been empowered to prevent extravagance in employing municipal personnel by any municipality. The Director has power to require the municipality to reduce the number of persons recruited or proposed to be recruited by it or the remuneration of such persons if he is satisfied that the number of such persons or remuneration given to such persons is excessive. Appeal against the Director's order may lie to the state government whose decision in the matter would be final (section 260 of the Act of 1963).

The state government, by a resolution<sup>11</sup>, defined what should be deemed to be reasonable expenditure on establishments of municipalities. It was decided that expenditures incurred by municipalities would be divided into two categories called 'self-supporting' and 'non-self-supporting'. Self-supporting items include electrical underakings (power house), water supply, drainage, bus service, and ferry services. Non-self-supporting items include general office, collecting taxes, octroi collection, birth and death registration, fire service, hospital and dispensaries, public works, gardens, election work, famine relief work, general conservancy, town planning, markets and slaughterhouses, veterinary dispensaries and libraries. With regard to items not mentioned in this resolution, the director of municipalities would decide in consultation with the examiner of local fund accounts whether any item is self-supporting or not. In the event of any disagreement at this stage, the matter is referred to the state government for order. The expenditure of municipalities for non-self-supporting items are not at present allowed to go beyond 45 per cent of their income from non-self-supporting items and from various government grants (donations received by municipalities are excluded for computing municipal income for the purpose of this resolution).<sup>12</sup>

In Gujarat the municipal government vests in the Muni-

<sup>11</sup>Government of Gujarat, Department of Health and Industries, Resolution No. Mun-3759/29325-AI, dated August 7, 1961.

<sup>12</sup>Initially the permissible limit was 33 per cent of income; it was raised to 45 per cent after introduction of pay scales as recommended by the Desai Pay Commission.

pality. The executive power of the municipality vests in the chief officer, subject to the approval or sanction of the municipality or of the executive committee of the municipality, as the case may be, and subject also to all other restrictions, limitations and conditions statutorily imposed. The president of the municipality keeps a watch over the financial and executive administration of the municipality. He also exercises supervision and control over all officers and servants of the municipality in connexion with executive administration, accounts, and records of the municipality.

Every municipality has the post of a chief officer. The minimum qualification statutorily laid down for chief officer is graduation in any subject or in engineering, or holding a diploma in local self-government (*i.e.* LSGD awarded by the All-India Institute of Local Self-Government, Bombay or its Ahmedabad Branch) and having experience of municipal administrative work for not less than seven years. This is the only obligatory appointment to be made by every municipality.

The chief officer is statutorily authorised to enter into contract on behalf of the municipality, and to act as the controlling officer of all other officers and servants of the municipality.

If the state government so directs, appointment of a health officer and land valuation officer or such other officers as directed becomes obligatory for the municipality.

For the purpose of enabling the municipalities to discharge their functions and duties, the state government has the power to direct that officers belonging to the All-India Service and state service (except class IV employees) be posted in a municipality for a specified period under specified conditions. Such officers, when posted in a municipality, would be paid out of the funds of the municipality concerned (section 256 of the Act of 1963).

Apart from what has been described so far, Gujarat has no system of the state government fixing the staffing pattern in municipalities or determining the scales of pay and allowances of municipal personnel. There are some obligatory and discretionary functions of municipalities laid down by the statute. The Director of Municipalities is

empowered to make regular inspections of the municipalities in order to assess the standard of performance of municipal administration in regard to both obligatory and discretionary functions. The municipalities in Gujarat are left free to decide upon their own staffing pattern, staff strength, pay scales and allowances of their officers and employees, subject to the administrative requirement of the state government that the expenditures on account of staff and establishment would not exceed 45 per cent of the non-self-supporting income of the municipality.

There is no system of state-level training of municipal personnel in Gujarat. The officers and employees may be individually deputed by their own municipalities to some regional or national centre for training in municipal administration. □

# THE PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AT WORK

Municipal administration is a special type of administration. It is different from national and state level administration in that it needs administrative skill as well as intimate knowledge of the locality. It is mostly labour-intensive, and both regulatory and service-oriented in nature. Hence the purpose of management of municipal personnel has to be multi-dimensional. One has to take more than one criterion to judge the efficacy of personnel management in municipal administration. The actual working of the personnel systems in municipal administration of Rajasthan and Gujarat have been compared and contrasted in this chapter with reference to various criteria.

## *Qualified Personnel*

The attractiveness of any service depends on salary and other compensations as well as the prestige of the service. One of the frequently-used arguments in favour of unified personnel system in municipal administration has been its ability to attract more qualified personnel in municipal service than is possible in a separate municipal personnel system. Since unified service is a state-level service, it certainly enjoys a higher prestige compared to service under any particular municipality. If any highly qualified person is found to be in the municipal service in a separate personnel system, invariably he has some special personal reasons for staying in the particular locality. In separate personnel system the salary scale depends on the municipality's ability to pay, but in unified personnel system the salary scale is determined by the state government and the municipality has to pay the appropriate scale.

The qualifications of, and the pay scales enjoyed by, some top management functionaries actually working in the municipalities studied [in Rajasthan and Gujarat can be compared.

TABLE 1 QUALIFICATIONS OF MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL\*

	<i>Rajasthan Municipalities</i>	<i>Gujarat Municipalities</i>
Commissioner/ Ex. Off./Chief Officer	(a) Sangare: M.A., LL.B. (b) Chittorgarh: B.Com. Trg. in Municipal Adm. (c) Tonk: B.A., LSGD. (d) Udaipur: M.A., (on deputation from RAS)	(a) Umreth: B.A. LSGD (b) Dhoraji: S.S.C., LSGD (c) Verabal: B.A., LSGD (d) Nadiad: M.A., B.Com., LL.B.
Municipal Engineer/ Asst. Engineer	(a) Sangare: Nil (b) Chittorgarh: B.E. (c) Tonk: B.E. (d) Udaipur: B.Sc., B.E.	(a) Umreth: Nil (b) Dhoraji : Nil (c) Verabal : vacant (B.E. required) (d) Nadiad : B.E.
Health officer	(a) Sangare: Nil (b) Chittorgarh: vacant (c) Tonk: M.B.,B.S. (d) Udaipur : M.B.,B.S.	(a) Umreth : Nil (b) Dhoraji : part-time service (c) Verabal : M.B.,B.S. (d) Nadiad: M.B.,B.S. DPH (London).

\* SOURCE: Data supplied by the municipalities during field investigation.

It becomes apparent (Table 1) therefore that personnel of higher qualifications would generally be available to municipal bodies under the unified system. But equally qualified personnel can be available under separate system also if high pay scales and other compensations could be provided.

#### *Salaries and Allowances*

In Rajasthan the salary scales for the municipal personnel



of all categories are still inferior to those applicable for the comparable grades of personnel in the state government. After recent (1981) revision, the salary scales for the RMS officers, as determined by the state government, are as follows:

Commissioner	Rs. 1000—1860
E.O. class II/Secretary	Rs. 820—1550
E.O. class III	Rs. 640—1100
E.O. class IV	Rs. 520—925
Engineer	Rs. 1000—1860
Health officer	Rs. 1000—1860

In Gujarat the salary scales for the municipal officers differ from one municipality to another. This is evident from the figures (Table 2) given below:

TABLE 2 SALARY SCALES OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS IN GUJARAT\*

	<i>Nadiad</i> (Rs.)	<i>Veraval</i> (Rs.)	<i>Dhoraji</i> (Rs.)	<i>Umreth</i> (Rs.)
Chief officer	1300-2000	650-1200	700-1500	650-1200
Engineer	700-1400	650-1040	vacant	no such post
Asst. engineer	650-960	no such post	vacant	—do—
Health officer	700-1400	650-1040	475-800 (part- time)	—do—

\*SOURCE: Data supplied by the municipalities.

It is therefore found that the staffing pattern at the top management level and salary scales in Gujarat municipalities basically depends on the municipality's ability to pay. This makes a real difference in the technical side of municipal management so far as availability of posts and retention of qualified persons in municipal service are concerned. The affluent municipalities like Nadiad can afford to create top-level posts and attract suitable persons in engineering and public health departments. But so far as general administrative side is concerned, persons of almost the same standard qualifications are available for municipal service in unified as well as

possible that different scales would be enjoyed by the officers in different municipalities. As there is no state-level uniformity insisted on by the state government in the matter of pay-scales of municipal employees, the decision is taken by each municipality separately. The chief officers in Gujarat are mostly officers promoted from within the organisation and have a long service record in the municipality concerned. Moreover, they are seen to have developed deep local roots and, therefore, they do not usually seek any change of service from one municipality to another.

It is not only the basic pay scales but also the admissible allowances and other financial benefits of terminal nature which attract personnel to a particular service. In both Gujarat and Rajasthan the municipal officers and employees are, at present, entitled to dearness allowance at par with the rate applicable to the state government employees. In Rajasthan it is a state government decision but in Gujarat this decision has been separately taken by the municipalities who find it difficult to deny this benefit to their employees, especially in the context of this practice being followed in most other states. So far as other allowances are concerned, it is found that different municipalities in Gujarat have admitted different amounts of house rent, medical, conveyance and livery allowances. In a small municipality (Umreth) the municipal employees do not receive any house rent, medical, conveyance, and livery allowance, the only exception being the sweepers who receive a paltry sum of Rs. 4 per month as house rent allowance. In the medium and big municipalities (Dhoraji, Verabal, Nadiad) the admissible HRA is 7.5 per cent of the total amount of basic pay plus dearness allowance. In Rajasthan, however, municipal employees receive HRA at the state government rate which is much higher than 7 per cent. Medical allowance admissible to municipal employees in Rajasthan is at the consolidated rate of Rs. 30 per month, whereas in Gujarat it varies from one municipality to another. A small municipality like Umreth pays no medical allowance and the biggest municipality at Nadiad pays only Rs. 15 per month, and the two medium-sized municipalities at Dhoraji and Verabal fully reimburse the medical expenses of their employees. Conveyance allowance,

again, is nil in Umreth municipality, but is partly admissible in Dhoraji and Verabal municipalities. In Nadiad municipality it is given as per the following rates which are comparable to such allowance prevalent in Rajasthan : official car to chief officer, Rs. 200 p.m. to the engineer, Rs. 50 to the assistant engineer, Rs. 50 to the octroi inspector, and Rs. 50 to the Sanitary Inspector. Moreover, Dhoraji municipality also offers some equipment allowance to its employees on outdoor duty; Nadiad municipality gives interim relief at half the rate fixed by the state government for its own employees.

In Rajasthan, some municipalities offer other special types of allowances; for example, in Udaipur the drivers of heavy vehicles receive an allowance of Rs. 5 p.m. and the fire-fighting staff receive hard duty allowance at the following rates per month: Rs. 50 to fire officer, Rs. 25 to sub-fire officer, Rs. 15 to firemen, and Rs. 20 to the drivers of fire-fighting vehicles.

Terminal benefits also vary from one municipality to another in Gujarat. In Rajasthan and Gujarat there is no general system of pension for municipal employees but in Nadiad municipality those who joined after 1960 are eligible for pension at the rate of 50 per cent of average pay of the last ten months of service. In Gujarat employees in general enjoy the benefit of contributory provident fund, but the rates vary from 8.5 per cent in Nadiad and 8.0 per cent in Umreth to 6.25 per cent in Verabal and in Dhoraji. The rate of gratuity also varies between 15 days' pay per each completed year of service in Umreth to 15 months' pay in Verabal.

### *Leave Facilities*

Leave facility is another factor contributing to the attractiveness of a personnel system. The municipal personnel in Rajasthan enjoy a variety of leaves sufficient to make municipal service comparatively attractive to any other service. The admissible leaves and their amounts are as follows:

- (i) Privilege (earn) leave at the rate of 1 month per completed year of service accumulating up to six

months; every year the employee would have the option either to enjoy 60 days' leave, or 30 days' leave plus encashment of 30 days' leave.

- (ii) Half-pay leave at the rate of 20 days in every completed year of service, which can be commuted to 10 full days' leave; the maximum amount of half payleave would be 480 days or 240 days' full-pay leave in 20 years' service.
- (iii) Maternity leave (permissible upto 3 deliveries at the rate of 45 days pre-natal and 45 days post-natal leave).
- (iv) Leave not due, that is, in case of sickness or disease, such leave would be granted and adjusted against half-pay leave.
- (v) Terminal leave is available in case of termination of service before superannuation: this is the balance of earn leave due.
- (vi) Casual leave : 12 days per year.

It is interesting to note that the leave pattern followed by Gujarat municipalities is nearly the same as the Rajasthan pattern. But Dhoraji municipality has in addition one kind of special leave for 10 days per year for employees on outdoor duty; and Verabal municipality has a system of extraordinary leave without pay upto a maximum period of six months.

The above account shows that so far as pay, allowances and leave facilities are concerned, municipal service in Gujarat, separately controlled by individual municipalities, has been made equally, if not more, attractive compared to the unified municipal service in Rajasthan.

The two systems, however, substantially differ in respect of transfer and security of service. In Rajasthan municipal officers (only RMS people, in practice) have to suffer all sorts of disturbances resulting from their transfer from one municipality to another, but they enjoy full service security. In Gujarat, on the other hand, municipal officers and employees are not transferable but they definitely enjoy less service security than is enjoyed by their counterparts in Rajasthan.

*Transfer*

Like any other kind of public administration, municipal administration also has to function within a political environment. Municipal functions and activities, whether a regulatory function like sanctioning building plans and framing building regulations or a development function like road-building and maintenance, touch upon the interests of the people in a variety of ways. There are local politicians and people's representatives who are interested in seeing that the municipality exercises its powers and functions in the way they like. Hence the personnel who are to run the municipal administration have to take note of the local political pressures, especially when there is an elected municipal council or board. When the municipal personnel themselves are recruited and controlled by the locally elected elements, the municipal officers and employees are likely to be influenced and guided by this political element to a large extent. The unified personnel system claims that it can resist the local political pressures better than is possible in a separate personnel system. However, from Rajasthan's experience, as found in the four municipalities studied, this claim in favour of unified personnel system is hardly justified.

The personnel of unified municipal service in Rajasthan begin their career as the executive officer in a class IV municipality, and in course of time they may expect to rise up to the position of a commissioner of a class I municipality. In the four municipalities studied, it is found that the average period an EO has served in a municipality is 2 years. The maximum period served varies between 7 years in one case and 1 year 6 months in another case, and the minimum period of stay has varied between 3 years in one case and 2 months 15 days in another case. The rate of transfer of EO/commissioner (Table 3) shows that there is no uniformity in the matter of transfer of municipal officers in Rajasthan.

In practice, the transfer of the executive officer of a municipality in Rajasthan appears to be directly related to his personal equation with his municipal president and/or his local MLA. The MLA belonging to the ruling party appears to be all powerful in achieving or preventing transfer of

TABLE 3 TRANSFER OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS  
IN RAJASTHAN\*

<i>Case No.</i>	<i>Total service length</i>	<i>Number of transfers</i>
1.	5 years	15
2.	23 years	7
3.	22 years	10
4.	9 years	3

\*SOURCE : Data gathered during field investigation.

municipal EO/commissioner.<sup>1</sup> In practice, all such matters are finally referred to, and decided by, the minister, who generally listens to the requests/demands made by the local MLA belonging to his own political party.

#### *Local Political Pressures*

Usually local political pressures are seen to be exerted on top municipal management personnel in Rajasthan in connexion with one or more of the following types of request/demands, viz.:

- (a) making concessions in valuation and assessment of house property;
- (b) sanctioning building plans as submitted;
- (c) overlooking the deviations made in building constructions;
- (d) taking a lenient view in collection of the arrear taxes/dues/charges;
- (e) selecting/appointing a relative or party nominee for appointment in subordinate/ministerial or class IV services; and
- (f) taking no disciplinary action against an employee whose case has been recommended by the MLA for being favourably treated.

If the EO/Commissioner cannot sort out such pressures through either persuasion or diplomacy, he is most likely to incur the wrath of the local political boss. If the local MLA

belongs to the political party controlling the state government at that moment, and wants the municipal EO/commissioner to be transferred, his request or pressure is most likely to be accepted by the state government.

So far as pressures for concessional valuation and assessment of house property and collection of arrear taxes are concerned, there is no way of studying the impact of the personnel system on the effectiveness of municipal government in this regard, because in all the municipalities studied in Rajasthan the municipal taxation on house properties has been kept in abeyance by order of the state government for the last fifteen years or so. Political parties, in fact, make pledges at times of municipal election not to revive the municipal taxation of house properties. But so far as the other grounds of exerting local political pressures are concerned, EOs/commissioners have been the victims of the wrath of local MLAs of the ruling party, if requests/demands of MLAs are not conceded. MLAs belonging to the opposition parties do not, however, enjoy this influence, because the minister and the state officials have no reason to honour the views of opposition MLAs.

Even when an order for routine transfer of EO/commissioner is issued, political influence is seen to be at play if the concerned officer happens to be unwilling to be transferred and has access to his local MLA and/or other state-level politicians for pleading his case with the minister or the high-ups in the Directorate of Local Bodies. It is gathered that the universal experience of the executive officers of municipalities throughout Rajasthan is that they would have to make regular payments to their local MLAs if they want to prevent any unwanted transfer.<sup>2</sup>

Thus so far transfer of personnel belonging to the Rajasthan Municipal Service has not been used as a normal method of personnel management. Transfer of RMS officers have taken place more on political than on administrative grounds. Where transfer of any EO becomes necessary on his being promoted, his posting again becomes a matter which hardly remains unaffected by sheer political connexions and

recommendations. Some officers are, again, transferred without their seeking or resisting any transfer, because some other officers having strong political pulls want posting in particular municipalities of their choice.

It is theoretically argued that sometimes transfer is good both for the officer who is transferred and also for the organisation he serves. If any knotty problem of interpersonal relation happens to arise within any organisation, transfer is an accepted method of personnel management for restoring the health of the organisation and also for protecting the interest of the officer concerned. In the management of Rajasthan Municipal Service there seem to be few cases of transfer of executive officers and commissioners purely on administrative considerations. In some cases the frequency of transfer of EO is too high to allow any such key officer to concentrate on his job of municipal administration. The apparent reason of such frequent transfers appears to be the inability of particular EO/commissioner to satisfy either the municipal president or the local MLA of the ruling party or some influential local notables. In one case it has been found that the Member of Parliament from the areas, who is also very much connected with the political high-ups in the state government, directly demanded of the municipal commissioner to exercise powers to sanction the building plan submitted by one of his supporters in the locality. The refusal by the municipal commissioner to go the whole hog with the MP led to his transfer in no time. Since this particular municipal officer happened to be young and had little family difficulties in being transferred, he could afford to resist such pressures as far as was possible for him.<sup>2a</sup> But, in cases of senior officers in the RMS having family difficulties, the spirit and guts to resist local political pressure are not always seen to be enough for understandable reasons. On being transferred to a new locality the municipal officers having family responsibilities usually find it very difficult to arrange for their housing and children's education.<sup>3</sup> In the case of Rajasthan, the mere existence of transferable executives in unified personnel system has been no guarantee that such officers would be able

<sup>2a</sup>Source : Field Investigation.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*



to resist local political pressures more successfully than in a separate personnel system.

In Gujarat, on the other hand, municipal chief officers are recruited and fully controlled by their respective municipal councils. In all the municipalities studied, the chief officers are found to have been invariably promoted from much lower posts in the municipality over a period ranging from fifteen to twenty years. Since these officers have spent long years in the same municipality, they know personally almost all the local politicians who really matter in municipal administration. Their principal qualifications seem to be two: first, their long experience in, and considerable knowledge about, municipal administration in the locality; and secondly, their ability to get along with the presidents, councillors and other local politicians. Once a person comes to occupy the top administrative post in the hierarchy of municipal administration through this process and statutorily enjoys the protection that he cannot be removed without a positive two-thirds majority of the total number of councillors voting in a special council meeting called for this purpose, he cannot be easily removed.

Thus removal of municipal chief officers is not that easy to achieve in Gujarat where there is a separate personnel system. In Gujarat the local political pressures and influences over the top administrative cadre of municipal management are systemic in nature. The personnel system, to some extent, is bound to produce a result like this. Experience shows that undue requests and pressures sometimes come from the elected elements in the municipal council, including council president and chairmen of various committees in matters like disposal of municipal lands, assessment and valuation of house properties, granting trade licences, erecting standposts in particular localities, installing tube-lights instead of ordinary bulbs in particular streets, and draining off waters and removing garbages from private lands at municipal cost, and recommending or rescinding transfer of municipal employees from one department to another. It becomes generally very difficult for the chief officer and other departmental heads in municipal administration in Gujarat to stand up and resist such pressures and undue influences. A chief officer enjoying a long innings in municipal administration in Gujarat has claimed to have 'successfully' dealt with this kind of pressures

by his technique of not saying 'no' directly to anybody. He appears to have developed this technique through his long experience of working in the same municipality and his considerable knowledge about the local area and the local people. It is his diplomatic skill, so to say, of handling people, their complaints and requests which has stood him through the years. He knows that he cannot be easily removed so long as the two-thirds of elected councillors do not irrevocably go against him.<sup>3a</sup>

In another case in Gujarat the chief officer appears confident about dealing with the president, vice-president and the ruling group which does not command two-thirds majority in the council. Rather the elected president appears to be helpless, although he and his group became disgusted with the chief officer who appeared to them as non-cooperative. They wish they could remove the chief officer but cannot do that because of the statutory requirement of two-thirds majority.<sup>3b</sup> In such cases, the elected elements have been found to favour a state-wide transferable service of municipal chief officers. On the other hand, some chief officers who have gone through unpleasant experiences at the hands of their president and other elected elements in municipal council prefer transfer and, for that reason, a state-wide common cadre of municipal chief officers and other top officers of municipal administration. The number of municipal chief officers who prefer a transferable common cadre of their own goes as high as 75 per cent of such officers interviewed. Only those who are on the verge of retirement and those who have till now succeeded in handling elected elements quite diplomatically and successfully have clearly indicated their strong dislike of any transferable common cadre of their own.<sup>4</sup>

The system of transfer of municipal officers belonging to a unified service, as implemented in Rajasthan, shows its vulnerability to state-level political pressures. The absence of such a system in Gujarat, on the other hand, shows the vulnerability of the municipal officers to local politics and

<sup>3a</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.

<sup>3b</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

politicians. But the system in Gujarat, at least, does not allow interference of the minister or local MLAs in municipal personnel management. If two-thirds majority of the municipal councillors are not clearly committed to remove the chief officer, he remains secure in his post. But how effective he will be in leading the administrative hierarchy of the municipality depends upon his relations with other officers and subordinate staff of the municipality and their relations with municipal councillors. As is quite natural in a separate personnel system, most of the municipal officers and the subordinate staff are known to have enjoyed the patronage of some or other municipal councillors. The very process of separate recruitment by individual municipality is bound to produce such results. A bad effect of this system can be seen in a situation where the chief officer enjoyed full confidence of the group which had appointed and promoted him but which is no longer in control of the council. The chief officer, in one such case in Gujarat, has been alleged to be not serving the present ruling group that much faithfully. Rather the allegation has been that the chief officer has been misleading the elected leadership which is in control of the municipality at the moment.<sup>4a</sup> Had there been a unified cadre of municipal chief officers in Gujarat, the elected municipal leadership could seek transfer of such officers, which is an easier course of action than mobilising two-thirds majority in the council for dismissal of a chief officer. Transfer, in such cases, would be welcomed by both the elected leadership and the municipal bureaucracy. The elected leadership need not strain all its nerves to remove a non-cooperating officer, and the officer concerned, on the other hand, need not risk his job because of incurring the displeasure of a sizeable majority of councillors for some reason or other.

### *Service Security*

Unification of municipal cadres undoubtedly produces a sense of service security among municipal officers. In Rajasthan elaborate rules have been made by the state government to protect the service interests of municipal officers and

<sup>4a</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.

all kinds of municipal staff throughout the state. On the contrary, the municipal officers and staff in Gujarat are to work under rules framed by individual municipalities. Should any dispute arise, municipal officers and employees in Gujarat either have to depend on the decisions of the committees and the council or have to go to labour courts. These labour courts are to treat these disputes as industrial disputes and the verdict of labour court has to be either accepted by the municipality or appealed against to superior courts. The incidences of dismissal of municipal employees in the last five years in the municipalities studied (Table 4) are insignificant, and even these dismissals took place on well-known grounds of cognisable offence like embezzlement of municipal funds. But dismissal incidence appears higher in Gujarat than in Rajasthan, because in Gujarat a municipal council can remove any municipal officer/employee by a resolution to that effect passed in the council by a simple majority (by two-thirds majority in case of chief officer). In fact, a general impression is sometimes gained in Gujarat that municipal employees are to be careful in not offending the ruling group in the council lest they are subjected to some kind of punishment, though not dismissal.

TABLE 4 DISMISSAL OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Employees dismissed 1977-82</i>
Udaipur (Rajasthan)	Nil
Tonk ( " )	Nil
Chittorgarh ( " )	1
Sangare ( " )	Nil*
Nadiad ( Gujarat )	Nil
Verabal-Patan ( " )	3
Dhoraji ( " )	Nil
Umreth ( " )	7

\*In fact, 7 employees had been dismissed by the municipal board but all of them were subsequently reinstated by the Director of Local Bodies.

SOURCE : Data supplied by the municipalities.

Punishment and dismissals apart, it is sometimes claimed that the unified personnel system offers more promotion

opportunities and better career prospects and, therefore, produces more contented staff than does a separate personnel system.

### *Career Prospects*

One of the grounds for advocating the unified municipal personnel system is that it offers better career prospects and promotion opportunities to municipal employees than are available in a separate municipal personnel system. In case of Rajasthan, it is found that the municipal laws and rules reserve certain categories of post for promotees; these posts cannot be filled by direct recruitment. The EO, for example, starts his career as the executive officer in a class IV municipality and may advance in his career right upto the post of a commissioner of a municipal council. In the municipalities studied in Rajasthan, it is found that one municipal commissioner obtained three promotions in his twenty years' career and one executive officer (class II) obtained two promotions in his twenty-three years' career.<sup>5</sup> Of late, the state government has started the practice of posting officers of state administrative service on deputation to municipalities; Udaipur, at present, has a junior officer of Rajasthan Administrative Service as the municipal commissioner. This shows that the unified municipal personnel system as practised in Rajasthan does not always ensure good prospects for promotion to the personnel of RMS, as deputation of state service officers means blocking the promotion of some RMS officers.

Moreover, promotion for RMS officers is found to be a not-too-easy one in practice. Promotion is an important aspect of personnel management procedure, and the case study of promotion of one RMS officer in Rajasthan<sup>6</sup> shows that the personnel in the RMS do not receive any systemic assurance of receiving fair deal in respect of their promotion.

In Gujarat's separate personnel system, on the other hand, municipal personnel receive promotion and that too without not much trouble, so to say. The chief officers of all the municipalities studied in Gujarat are found to have come to their

<sup>5</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.

present posts from within the municipality concerned. There, technically speaking, the post of chief officer of a municipality is openly advertised and the minimum qualification is fixed at either graduation plus diploma in LSG course from a recognised institution or at least seven years' practical experience of working as the administrative head of a municipality. The internal candidates are free to apply in response to such advertisements. It has been found in the four municipalities studied that the persons who entered as clerks, gathered experience and the minimum requisite qualifications in course of time, and were finally elevated to the chief officer in roughly about fifteen to twenty years' time. In one case the person joined as the municipal secretary and he was selected as chief officer in 15 years' time.

In Gujarat both selection and promotion from lower posts to higher posts are made formally by the municipal council on the recommendation of a standing committee variously called Staff Selection Committee or Municipal Service Committee appointed by the municipal council. Each municipality has its own composition of the selection committee, but normally this committee comprises the council president, vice-president, and three to five other councillors elected by the council. In some municipalities the chief officer and the head of the concerned department are included in the selection committee when it meets to select internal candidates for promotion to posts other than the top posts. The promotion posts are filled by internal candidates through interview taken by the selection committee. If the post is open, as is the case with the post of chief officer, municipal engineer, and health officer, there has to be an open advertisement detailing the qualifications needed of the candidates. The internal candidates are also free to apply in response to this advertisement. Subsequently interview takes place for selecting candidates. It is claimed that while selecting candidates for promotion, the four-fold criteria of seniority, merit, experience and efficiency are considered. Sometimes, for lower categories of posts, municipalities in Gujarat restrict their selection among the names included in the list sent by organisations like the local employment exchange, social welfare board, and ex-service men's association.

What is true of chief officers is not, however, true of municipal engineers and accounts officers. In three municipalities in Gujarat, engineering overseers look after the engineering department. These overseers are generally recruited as draftsmen and surveyors, and get promoted in eight to ten years' time. Only the biggest municipality (*i.e.*, Nadiad) is found to have appointed a fully qualified municipal engineer. But the qualified engineers usually do not stay long in municipal service. The average period of stay of a qualified engineer in municipal service in Gujarat is found to be less than two years. Even junior engineers do not stay long in medium or small municipalities. In one case it has been found that the overseer is officiating as the head of the engineering department for as long as five years, although the municipality has one sanctioned post of engineer. Again, only the biggest municipality has one accounts officer, but all three others carry on with the services of an accountant only. These accountants are again promotees and their only professional forte is their actual experience of working in the municipality concerned.

Another issue considered in the present study has been that unified personnel system cannot produce the benefits of manpower planning and effective municipal administration unless all grades of officials, including the intermediate supervisory grades, are brought under it. For verifying this hypothesis the effectiveness of municipal administration would be judged in terms of: (a) proper implementation of municipal decisions and rules, and (b) conditions of tensions and conflicts afflicting municipal administration.

#### PERFORMANCE LEVEL

It is found that municipalities in Rajasthan spend a higher percentage of their income on personnel than what are spent on personnel by the municipalities in Gujarat. Because of a statutory limitation, municipalities in Gujarat at present are not allowed to spend more than 45 per cent of their non-self-supporting income as expenditure on their personnel. There being no such limitation enforced by the state government in Rajasthan, it is found that in a medium-sized municipality in Rajasthan the percentage of income spent on personnel in

1982-83 was as high as 65 per cent; even a very small municipality spends as much as 45 per cent of its total income as personnel expenditure. But in Gujarat the percentage of municipal income spent on personnel has been found to be much smaller. In large-sized municipalities like Veraval and Dhoraji, it is something like 38 per cent, and in a small-sized municipality, like Umreth, it is 43 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

The effectiveness of Rajasthan's unified personnel system in improving municipal administration seems doubtful. In no municipality studied in Rajasthan the level of performance, in respect of maintenance of records, facts and figures, does appear to be as high as that in the municipalities studied in Gujarat. This seems to occur probably because of the fact that the top management level in municipal administration in Rajasthan does not have as strong a control and supervision over the intermediate supervisory level personnel in municipalities as is found in Gujarat's separate personnel system. The RMS people, especially in the junior level, seem to be mostly preoccupied with the chances of their transfer. These people generally appear to be forced by their administrative and political environments to take a lenient view and posture in enforcing municipal decisions and applying municipal rules, and also in controlling their personnel in the subordinate and ministerial service. In Rajasthan the municipal subordinate and ministerial personnel, in practice, are not transferred and even their recruitment has been, in practice, local. These personnel know that they would remain in their respective municipality's service but their departmental bosses and superiors in the RMS would be transferred in course of time. Since subordinate service personnel owe their jobs, to a large extent, to the influence of local politicians and/or the local notables, including some municipal councillors, they often appear to succumb to local vested interests, pressures and influences even against the directions of their departmental superiors. The heads of departments of the municipalities in Rajasthan, especially the technical people, belong to the RMS, but a sizeable section of them also come to municipal administration on deputation from either the departments of

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix I.



the state government or its agencies.

As in December 1983 in Rajasthan as a whole there is a predominance of technical officers in municipal administration (Table 5), who are paid from the fund of the municipality they serve.

TABLE 5 OFFICERS ON DEPUTATION TO MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION IN RAJASTHAN\*

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Total Number</i>	<i>On Deputation</i>	<i>RMS</i>
Executive Engineers	7	7	Nil
Asst. Engineers (Mechanical)	5	5	Nil
Asst. Engineers (Civil)	30	24	6
Accounts Officers	8	7	1
Municipal Commissioners (generalist)	18	2	16

\*SOURCE: Information supplied by Directorate of Local Bodies, Rajasthan.

The very fact that the boss is either transferable or on deputation and the subordinates are locally recruited and non-transferable makes it rather difficult to enforce fully various rules of municipal administration, and sometimes also difficult to enforce municipal decisions not acceptable to the local politicians, notables and other influential people. It has been found that about 75 per cent of municipal commissioners, executive officers and engineers, who have been interviewed in connection with this study, seem to feel this difficulty in personnel management within their departments and organisations.<sup>8</sup> To some extent, municipal corruption, especially in regard to unauthorised constructions and illegal encroachment on municipal lands, seem to thrive because of this lack of effective control in personnel administration.

There is the other side of the picture also. The state officers on deputation have been found to have a common complaint that the personnel in the unified municipal service, more often than not, lack loyalty and allegiance to the municipality they serve. Knowing that they are transferable, the

\*SOURCE : Field Investigation.

officers of the unified service do not appear to exert themselves fully for enforcing municipal rules in the matter of financial discipline, sanctioning of building plans, checking unauthorised constructions, enforcing public health rules, and so on.<sup>9</sup> In the case of health officers and medical doctors in municipal dispensaries there is no question of promotion, as there is no higher post in their field of specialisation under municipal administration. Therefore, in their case, promotion prospects cannot be used as the carrot in getting the best from these technical people. There is normally no open insubordination on the part of the unified service people *vis-a-vis* the state officers on deputation to municipal administration, mostly because of the fact that in course of time some of these state-level officers may be the administrative boss of the unified service personnel in the Directorate of Local Bodies. If the personnel of the unified municipal service can establish the right connexion in the Directorate of Local Bodies and the secretariat, on the one hand, and keep on maintaining good relations with the local MLA or other local notables, on the other, they need not bother about the expectations of the municipal organisation they serve for the time being.

The grievances of the RMS people are also quite understandable. In Rajasthan all municipal commissioners (except one) enjoy ad hoc positions, because all promotions in the RMS are ad hoc till now. No regularisation of these promotions has been done on the ground that the necessary promotion committee has not been constituted by the state government. The case study of promotion,<sup>10</sup> shows that actual working of the unified municipal personnel system in Rajasthan offers little systemic incentives to the personnel concerned for giving their best to the municipalities they serve. In fact, as the actual experience suggests, most of the RMS personnel seem to be sandwiched between the state-level officers on deputation to municipal administration and the locally-recruited, non-transferable subordinate and ministerial personnel. The local vested interests of the subordinate staff very often prove too powerful for the unified service personnel.

<sup>9</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix III.

in municipal administration because both the deputationist officers and the unified service personnel are mostly transferred for reasons of political pressures. This kind of situation is inimical to the growth of any strong sense of public service in the mind of any officer, especially when he is subject to erratic and frequent transfers. The professional body of the RMS officers—Rajasthan Municipal Service Association—is not at all an effective organisation for protecting the professional interest of its members. Its membership figure is about 300 and includes municipal commissioners, executive officers, revenue officers, municipal engineers, and accounts officers. Over the years it has failed to exhibit any trade union powers because of its organisational weakness.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that the status of the unified municipal service personnel in Rajasthan is not clear even today, although RMS came into existence more than two decades ago. The state government has denied these municipal personnel the status of state government employees on the ground that they do not draw salaries and allowances from the Consolidated Fund of the state and paid by the municipalities from their own funds. The RMS personnel, on the other hand, demand for themselves the status of state government officers on the ground that they are recruited by the state public service commission and their scales of pay, allowances and other service conditions are determined by the state government through notifications published in the official gazette of the state government. In fact, the issue regarding the nature of the status of the personnel of unified municipal service became a point in a law suit in Rajasthan High Court in 1980 when the authority of the state government to transfer the personnel of municipal subordinate service from one municipality to another came to be challenged. The contention of the petitioner was that the state government has no authority to transfer those who, in the eye of the state government, do not enjoy the status of state government employees. In the Jodhpur municipal case (1980) Rule 38 of the Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate and Ministerial Service Rules, 1963, has been challenged. The High Court ruled (1980) that the personnel of the Rajasthan Municipal Subordinate and Ministerial Service are not state government employees,

and, therefore, the state government has no authority to transfer them. The state government has appealed to the Supreme Court against the judgment of the Rajasthan High Court. The matter is still awaiting a ruling from the highest court of the land. Meanwhile, few RMS officers have left the service, because they expect that something in their favour may come out of this case.

#### PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND OPERATIONAL COMMAND

Performance appraisal basically seeks to evaluate two things: 'competence' and 'attitude' of the employee. These two are, again, interlinked insofar as one affects the other. The purpose of performance appraisal is to provide a sound information base to the management for adopting corrective, preventive and developmental measures with a view to upgrading performance level of the individual employee as well as of the organisation. Neither in Rajasthan nor in Gujarat there is hardly any strict job description in municipal subordinate and ministerial positions. Persons are often selected without any job specification. Hence performance appraisal seems to have little effect. Moreover, the executive responsibility in municipal management structure is diffused among more than one authorities and the personnel functions of municipal organisations are highly politicised. Hence the practice of objective appraisal of the performance of employee has not evolved in municipal administration in India. Besides, there is another factor, namely, the absence of any organisational culture which values 'competence'.

Gujarat has no system of performance appraisal in municipal administration. But having accepted unified personnel system in municipal administration, Rajasthan has introduced a system of performance appraisal in municipal administration. The municipal commissioners/executive officers in Rajasthan initiate the annual performance appraisal report about the personnel of the municipal subordinate and ministerial service which has to be countersigned by the president/chairman (by the administrator, if the municipality happens to be under supersession). The performance appraisal report about the municipal commissioner/executive officer is initiated by the

sub-divisional officer and countersigned by the district collector who forwards it to the Director of Local Bodies. The president of municipal council has nothing to do with judging the performance of his executive officer. The district collector normally does not take any interest in seeing that performance appraisals are recorded fairly and objectively. Whatever performance appraisal has to be done in the proforma set by the Director of Local Bodies is not at all objective in its approach: such appraisals are not related to the reality and are done in a mechanical fashion. The confidential reports are usually vague and cryptic as there is no attempt to assess positively the intelligence, devotion to work, and other qualities of the employee.

The executive officers in Rajasthan do not have any disciplinary powers over the subordinate and ministerial service personnel. Minor punishments like withholding of increments may be awarded by the chairman/president of the municipality. But the rules require that major punishments like degradation (demotion), suspension, and dismissal can be awarded by the appointing authority only: in case of the RMS personnel it is the state government, and in case of subordinate service personnel, it is the Director of Local Bodies. In fact, the departmental heads in municipalities in Rajasthan also do not control their staff in subordinate municipal service. In Rajasthan the municipal commissioner/executive officer does not initiate the confidential performance report about the departmental heads. He has, in fact, little controlling authority over the officers who come on deputation to municipal government. The EO has no disciplinary power over the municipal employees. He is not the chief officer in the full sense of the term and enjoys less powers over his immediately subordinate officers than that enjoyed by the chief officer of a municipality in Gujarat.

The unified municipal service in Rajasthan has achieved a high degree of service security and reasonably good remunerations for the personnel concerned and it has also opened up some promotion prospects for them. But the way this unified service is managed seems to have robbed the municipal personnel of their enthusiasm for strengthening municipal administration. The system, as run in practice, does not

allow them to make municipal administration as effective as it could have been if there were no unhealthy and almost ubiquitous interference of state and local-level politicians in municipal administration.

In Gujarat's separate municipal personnel system, on the other hand, the operational command is very clear. The chief officer is the leader of the entire machinery of municipal administration. He is directly responsible to the council president and the municipal council. All other officers are technically answerable to him, although they may have direct access to the president or committee chairman. The chief officer can even report to the district collector if he has any serious complaint against the elected leadership of the council.

All grades of municipal personnel are separately selected and appointed by the municipalities. The officers/employees being in the service of their appointing municipality only, have no other focus of loyalty and allegiance. Compared to their counterparts in Rajasthan, they technically enjoy less service security, no doubt, because their tenure depends on voting in the municipal council. But since the municipal organisations have been judicially declared to be regarded as industries, the municipal officers and employees are entitled to approach the labour courts. In fact, the labour courts are very much active in Gujarat to protect the municipal employees against any illegal and arbitrary dismissal or any other kind of punishments. Experience shows that in some of the municipalities studied there had been occasions when dismissed employees had to be reinstated because of the verdict of the labour court. Besides, the ordinary courts of law are also there to protect the interests of any municipal personnel by negating the wrongs which might have been done by the municipal council. Moreover, the Gujarat Municipal Act required that the approval of the Director of Municipalities would be necessary in certain cases of awarding major punishment by municipal council to its officers and employees. Separate municipal personnel system is not, therefore, in reality, that much insecure as it appears in the first instance.

Since all municipal personnel in Gujarat are locally

selected and the chain of command is very clear, municipal administration there suffers far less from divided loyalty and distorted allegiance than in Rajasthan. Municipal personnel in Gujarat at both top management and intermediate supervisory levels belong to the same organisation and the same personnel system. Only occasionally special officers are taken on loan from the state government. For example, Nadiad municipality sometimes takes recovery officers on loan from the land revenue department of the state government for a period of six months to one year. These officers are given the special job of recovering arrear taxes and are appointed on the condition that the municipality concerned would pay for their leave salaries and pension contribution. Similarly, medical officers for municipal dispensaries are sometimes taken on loan from the health department of the state government, as in Nadiad and Dhoraji municipalities. These state officers are on loan to municipal service and so long as they work for the municipality they remain under the general administrative supervision of the chief officer of the municipality. Unlike in Rajasthan, there is no controversy in Gujarat as to the status of municipal personnel, because the personnel are recruited and managed separately by the municipalities.

The separate municipal personnel system, as practised in Gujarat, therefore, appears far more effective in enforcing municipal decisions and rules than is the case in Rajasthan's unified municipal personnel system. In Gujarat the municipal personnel at the intermediate supervisory level have no scope of flouting the superior officers and yet remaining unaffected. If there is any vested interest within municipal administration, it affects the personnel at both the superior and subordinate levels. Gujarat municipalities have no system of using elaborate annual performance appraisal of subordinates by superior officers. However, enforcement of discipline within municipal administration does not seem to be as difficult in Gujarat as in Rajasthan. Because, in the Gujarat system it is not possible to remove any municipal officer by way of transfer. The chief officer and other departmental heads in Gujarat municipalities develop, in course of time, their own local roots and are not handicapped by the possibility of being transferred

In Gujarat the elective elements within the municipal council occasionally do some politiking with a view to interfering with municipal administration, but they do not possess any power or influence to remove municipal officers from their posts except through the rigorous procedure and for some specific reasons as laid down in the municipal law. A section of the elected councillors and presidents in Gujarat are known for their strong preference for common cadre of municipal officers because in that case they, at least, hope to have the opportunity of recommending transfer of these municipal officers whom they come to dislike for some reason or other.<sup>11</sup> But, at present, the only course open to them for tackling the undesirable officers is to terminate their services through a special resolution to be passed by a special majority in the council; and it is not very easy always. But the unified personnel system in Rajasthan has made it very easy for local and state-level politicians to get rid of municipal officers whom they do not like by canvassing at the right quarters for their transfer.

#### TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS

Within municipal administration there are some common hazards, for example, managing a huge number of unskilled personnel, especially the sweepers and scavengers whose life-style induces them to come to office sometimes in drunken condition, and the supervisory staff and top management have to face the music. These class IV employees ask for unauthorised leave and extra wages on a variety of grounds. This is an experience common to municipal personnel management in Rajasthan as well as Gujarat. The municipal officers are sometimes put hard to tackle these personnel by way of persuasion or veiled rebuke. Since this category of personnel enjoys the same non-transferable status in both Rajasthan and Gujarat, its working is not that relevant in judging the effectiveness of one or the other type of municipal personnel system.

But tensions build up within municipal administration in

<sup>11</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.



regard to internal promotion and transfer of employees from one department to another. Considering the general standard of honesty and integrity in public administration at lower levels in India, it can be safely asserted that posting in octroi check posts is supposed to be a coveted one in municipal administration. Employees posted in octroi branch of the revenue department of municipalities are normally found to be very much reluctant to shift to any other branch/section of municipal administration. In Rajasthan municipalities the internal posting of octroi guard or octroi clerk and supervisor give rise to tensions within the machinery of municipal administration. Since in Rajasthan the post of lower division clerk has been made equivalent to *nakadar*, there is all the time a pressure coming from the LDC category of personnel for being posted as *nakadars*; similarly, the octroi clerks resist their being shifted to general administration as LDC. The top management personnel in Rajasthan municipalities have to live with this kind of tensions generating from within municipal administration, and such tensions very often become linked up with recommendations and pressures of local politicians. Some municipalities in Gujarat have sought to ease this kind of administrative tension by making octroi posting available by means of rotation to all those entitled to it. Frequent transfers in the octroi branch are deemed to be necessary in the interest of effective municipal administration so far as revenue collection from octroi is concerned. In separate personnel system the dissatisfied personnel cannot go beyond the municipal administration for politicking, but in the unified personnel system the dissatisfied is tempted to go beyond the municipal administration for achieving what he wants.

However, the real tension in municipal management in Rajasthan revolves round the generalist-specialist relations. Compared to the generalist administrators, the engineers and health officers enjoy better scales of pay and they have not been clearly put under the administrative control of municipal commissioners/executive officers. The specialist invariably resents any attempt of the generalist administrators to verify the payments sanctioned by them or estimates of expenditure prepared by them. Because of their superior

scales of pay, the engineers consider themselves superior officers in municipal administration and seek to resist any supervision by the generalist officer like the commissioner or executive officer. Secondly, engineers and health officers claim that they are specialist and the intricacies of their specialisations cannot be understood by the generalist officers, hence they refuse to accept any suggestion which might be tendered by the generalist officer. There have been occasions in some municipalities in Rajasthan when the municipal engineer flatly refused to accept any direction, even of an administrative nature, from the executive officer. The generalist officers of the rank of commissioner or executive officer, on the other hand, maintain that they are entrusted with the overall responsibility of looking after the interests of municipal administration in general; hence, they are competent to scrutinise the bills for payments submitted by the engineering department or health department. Moreover, control over finance is traditionally regarded as part of general administration. The generalist administrators in municipal administration, therefore, do not agree to accept a role which would be, in practice, junior to that of the specialist like engineers and health officers. This kind of generalist-specialist tensions is present in almost all the municipalities in Rajasthan.

In Gujarat, however, the situation is less tense than in Rajasthan. First of all, the law makes it fully clear that the chief officer, usually a generalist, is the head of the entire hierarchy of municipal administration; hence there cannot be any question of any technical officer flouting the chief officer and getting away with whatever he feels to do. Secondly, all personnel—generalist as well as specialist—are recruited by the municipality concerned. Therefore a new entrant to the municipal service finds it difficult to challenge the system of superior-subordinate relations existing at a given point of time. The authority-structure in any organisation, especially in an autonomous body like municipality, develops over years together, and the municipal administration develops its own local tradition. The weight of local tradition of municipal administration cannot be challenged easily by any officer individually or departmentally. Thirdly,

municipal officers in separate personnel system normally serve a particular municipality for a long period. They understand the local politicians, local people and local situation as intimately as any other people concerned with municipal administration; hence, all the officers generally prefer to avoid administrative tensions among themselves. As they are not transferable, they know quite well that they themselves also have to suffer the tensions. And last of all, the technical personnel in municipal administration in Gujarat, when they come to head their department, are usually quite senior. And considering their age and qualifications, they cannot expect a commensurate job elsewhere. This seems to be one of the reasons of very low turnover of technical personnel in municipal administration in Gujarat.

Tensions indicate an atmosphere of the organisation concerned, but conflicts are, by nature, always issue-oriented. Both in Rajasthan and Gujarat it is found that conflicts within municipal management occasionally do arise between the administrative personnel and the elected leadership in respect of certain issues. First, when the elected local leadership wants to take undue advantage from municipal officers in respect of sanctioning building plans, valuation and assessment of house properties, collection of arrear taxes, or extension of municipal facilities by out-of-turn procedure in matters like road-repair, drainage, street-lighting or house connection of water-supply, conflicts sometimes do arise between the heads of municipal departments and the councillors and presidents/vice-presidents of municipalities. In unified personnel system of Rajasthan, there are quite a few cases where the commissioners/executive officers and engineers have succeeded in resisting the local pressures and not obliging with undue requests.<sup>12</sup> In most of these cases, the officer concerned was not afraid of being transferred and therefore he could succeed. But such inter-personal conflicts have resulted in their ultimate transfer from that municipality. Since these officers belong to a unified service, their material service interests are not adversely

<sup>12</sup>SOURCE : Field notes.

affected but it is a fact that they do not develop any commitment, dedication or enthusiasm in working for the municipality they serve.

In Gujarat's separate personnel system the municipal officers cannot go as far as their counterparts in Rajasthan for resisting pressures/requests for undue advantage. But the more senior among the chief officers are found to have succeeded in preventing their elected presidents/councillors from taking undue advantages of municipal infrastructure and other functional services by avoiding open confrontation with the president and councillors.<sup>13</sup> The usual technique has been to avoid saying 'no' openly to any such request/pressure but stick to departmental rules scrupulously. Of course, in doing so the chief officers have to use all sorts of diplomatic languages in order to prevent any open confrontation with the local politicians.

Another issue of conflict, found to be common in both Rajasthan and Gujarat, arises in connexion with the appointment of lower-grade and class IV staff. In both the systems studied here, such recruitments are done locally and there are some natural tendencies, on the part of elected local leadership, to induct their own people in municipal service in as large a number as possible. In Gujarat the permissible extent of municipal expenditure on personnel and establishment has been fixed by the state government, but in Rajasthan there is no such limits fixed. Hence conflicts arising out of this issue appear to be more numerous in Rajasthan than in Gujarat.

A third type of issue sometimes gives rise to conflict between municipal officers and elected local leadership, viz., lease or sale of municipal lands. Experience shows that elected leadership in the municipal council/board and in the executive committee/standing committee invariably press for lease or sale of municipal land to particular person(s). Whenever such pressures are resisted by the chief officer/executive officer, conflicts do arise. Under both Rajasthan and Gujarat systems, the EO/CO has been empowered to report to the Collector about any deal which he considers improper. Because of this power of the EO/CO, the elected leadership in the municipality seeks to befriend and/or

<sup>13</sup>SOURCE: Field Notes.

pressurise him for agreeing to all kinds of lease or sale of municipal land. In Rajasthan the Commissioners/EOs have been further empowered to stall the execution of any decision of the municipal council/board by reporting on the matter to the state government. This is a point of potential conflict in municipal management which sometimes raises its head depending on the personal equation between the EO/CO and the president of the municipality.

In the unified municipal personnel system such cases of conflicts between the municipal bureaucracy and the elected local leadership, when they become serious, are normally settled through the transfer of the officer concerned, if the municipal president happens to belong to the party controlling the state government at the moment. Very often it is found that conflicts arising from within a municipality first travels up to the office of the District Collector and, if not settled there, it goes right upto the secretariat and ministerial level. Sometimes, the interference of the local politician in such petty matters as internal transfer of municipal staff from one department to another assumes a local political colour jeopardising the relationship between municipal bureaucracy and local political leadership. The only consequence is then increased tensions and loss of effectiveness of municipal administration.

In separate municipal personnel system the municipal bureaucracy does not enjoy the fighting strength which comes from the membership of a statewide municipal cadre. The municipal personnel in a separate system naturally develop their local political connexions in order to survive. And in doing so, the municipal bureaucracy runs the risk of being 'politicised' in the vortex of the municipality's internal power politics. As a result, whatever integrity and courage can be found among the personnel of a unified service becomes a rare commodity in separate municipal service. Therefore, most of the chief officers in Gujarat, except only those who are approaching their retirement or have been able to develop a strong personal influence in the locality, strongly favour the creation of a unified statewide common cadre of their own.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> SOURCE : Field Notes.

This demand for a common cadre is not, however, found to be based on any knowledge of the actual difficulties experienced by the personnel of a unified municipal service as in Rajasthan.

The adverse effects of tensions and conflicts in municipal management on the system maintenance are more perceptible in Rajasthan than in Gujarat. The unified personnel system brings with it the rules and regulations laid down for application throughout the state and the municipal bureaucracy can hope to enjoy a mechanism for fighting against undue political interference at the local level. But Rajasthan's experience shows that this hope proves to be an illusion, so to say. The only thing that seems to have been achieved through the unified municipal personnel system in Rajasthan is to push the political pressures upto a level higher than local: instead of the municipal presidents/councillors, it is the local MLAs and/or the minister who are now interfering in municipal administration. Through such interference the municipal bureaucracy in the unified system is not adversely affected in respect of financial and other service benefits, but it can be harassed through frequent transfers. Very often frequent transfers or threats of a transfer proves sufficient to break the morale of the municipal bureaucracy and reduce the effectiveness of municipal administration throughout the state. In separate municipal personnel system, however, the tensions and conflicts are always localised and do not have any impact throughout the municipal administration in the state. Each conflict issue here has the potential of being settled with changes either in municipal presidentship or in the composition of the municipal council in the wake of a municipal election. Moreover, the Directorate of Municipalities in Gujarat performs a system of regular inspection of the municipalities in the state and has been empowered to suspend or remove municipal presidents on grounds of proven corruption or other disabilities to perform their functions. That is, the municipal bureaucracy in separate personnel system is not that helpless in the hands of the elected local leadership as it appears to be. The tensions and conflicts in separate municipal personnel system in Gujarat do not, therefore, have any deeply debilitating influence on municipal administration.

## STAFF TURNOVER

Staff turnover refers to loss and replacement of employees who leave their jobs for a variety of reasons. 'Turnover' mostly refers to that variety of job termination which culminates from resignation or voluntary exit. The rate of staff turnover is negligible in both Rajasthan and Gujarat. It is found (Table 6) that during the last five years a small number of employees in the subordinate municipal service and class IV employees have left their jobs in the municipalities studied. So far as the officers of the unified municipal service are concerned, they are just transferred from one municipality to another: this kind of administrative transfers cannot be called staff turnover (such transfers have not been taken into account in Table 6). But in the case of municipal employees in the subordinate and class IV services, it is found that only in Udaipur, where local low grade job opportunities are better than in other areas studied, some personnel like lower division clerks and drivers have left the municipal job and joined such institutions as Hindustan Zinc Corporation, Rajasthan State Mines and Minerals Corporation, and nationalised banks. But in Gujarat it is found that some technical personnel like junior engineers, overseers and medical officers have left municipal job for accepting posts in the state government

TABLE 6 STAFF LEAVING JOBS IN MUNICIPAL SERVICE\*  
(1977-78—1982-83)

	<i>Rajasthan</i>				<i>Gujarat</i>			
	<i>Udaipur</i>	<i>Tonk</i>	<i>Chittor- garh</i>	<i>Sangare</i>	<i>Nadiad</i>	<i>Vera- bal</i>	<i>Dhoraji</i>	<i>Umreth</i>
Officers								
(General Officers)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1
(Technical) Employees	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1	1	5
(General) Employees	3	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	1	1	1
(Technical)	2	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1	2

\*SOURCE : Information supplied by the Municipalities during field investigation.

departments and undertakings. It is interesting to note that under the separate municipal personnel system the rate of turnover of the technical personnel is particularly higher in small municipalities (e.g., Umreth) with definitely poor capacity to pay than in bigger municipalities (e.g., Nadiad) having larger resources.

One of the reasons for the negligible rate of staff turnover in both unified and separate municipal personnel system is the rather low level of qualification and skill of the municipal personnel at the intermediate and supervisory level. With the skills and qualifications they have, they cannot, in fact, hope to compete successfully for many alternative jobs elsewhere.

A certain amount of mobility of personnel is good for the organisation because mobility brings in freshness of viewpoint and breadth of experience on the part of the personnel. Higher rate of turnover also ultimately determines the opportunities for promotion within the organisation. The task of personnel management is, therefore, to avoid the Scylla of a stagnant service while steering clear of the Charybdis of inordinate instability.

### TRAINING

Where there is scope for promotion to higher posts, such advancement needs to be supported by adequate opportunities for development of human resources through in-service training. Such training would enable the municipal personnel to render their best in the present post and qualify them for more responsible higher posts. Neither in Rajasthan nor in Gujarat there is any regular arrangement of imparting in-service training to the municipal personnel.

A unified service is usually expected to insist on some pre-entry training. What is there in Rajasthan is a perfunctory system of imparting training to the new entrants into the RMS and the municipal subordinate and ministerial service. The completion of the One-year Diploma course in Local Self-Government (LSGD) conducted by the Rajasthan Institute of Local Self-Government at Jaipur is officially recognised as a desirable qualification for being appointed as



Executive Officer. This Institute also conducts six-month courses for sanitary inspectors, assessors, and revenue officers. The certificate of completion of these courses are recognised as compulsory requirements for appointments in municipal service. In Gujarat, on the other hand, there is absolutely no system of pre-entry training.

So far as institutionalised in-service training is concerned, it is generally absent in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Only very rarely the personnel in the subordinate service are sent to attend some refresher courses in Bombay's All-India Institute of Local Self-Government or Rajasthan Institute of Local Self-Government at Jaipur. But such courses are not held on a regular basis.

In Rajasthan it depends upon the municipal employee whether he desires to go in for some in-service training or not. If he prefers to undergo such training, he is entitled to six months' leave with full pay. If any employee successfully completes the LSGD course, he gets two increments in his pay. Despite these facilities and incentives, however small, there has not been any strong demand from municipal employees in Rajasthan for in-service training. During the last five years only about half a dozen personnel underwent some kind of in-service training in the four municipalities studied.<sup>15</sup> The reluctance of the municipalities in Rajasthan for encouraging training for their officers is quite understandable, because officer trained at the cost of one municipality would be transferred to another municipality some time after he receives the training. The state government should have accepted the responsibility for training municipal officers, but in practice it does not. Most of the training that the personnel in subordinate and ministerial service receive come through actual work experience in the office or in the field and through personal advices and instructions of the more experienced personnel within the department.

In Gujarat there is no insistence of any kind of pre-entry training. But municipalities do provide some facilities like six-months' leave with full pay for undergoing the LSGD course conducted by the Ahmedabad branch of the All-India

<sup>15</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.]

Institute of Local Self-Government, Bombay. But, as in Rajasthan, here also most of the training needs are met through actual work experience in the office or in the field. During the last five years, the total number of personnel who went for in-service training has not exceeded eight in the four municipalities studied.<sup>16</sup> Lack of institutional initiative and adequate incentives seem to be the factors responsible for the poor conditions of training in Gujarat's separate municipal personnel system.

### MEETING CITIZENS' GRIEVANCES

One of the criteria of judging the effectiveness of municipal administration is certainly to look into the nature and degree of complaints coming from the citizens who are the ultimate consumers of the services rendered by municipal government and to examine the machinery for meeting the grievances of the citizens. Because of its closeness to the people, municipal administration cannot afford to keep itself aloof from the people. Unlike the administrators in the central and state governments, the municipal administrators handle problems which affect the day-to-day living of the people. If the municipal administration can be made sensitive and responsive to the people's grievances, municipal government can be said to be effective to some extent.

Irrespective of the type of personnel system followed, People's grievances flow into municipal administration through four channels: first, through the elected municipal councillors who carry the grievances of their constituencies to the administrators of the Town Hall; secondly, through the activities of the local political parties or local units of the state and/or national political parties; thirdly, through voluntary agencies/associations which take active interests in civic problems and their remedies; and fourthly, through the citizens individually. Of these four channels, the first three sometimes overlap. That is to say, it is the nature of local politics which determines how and to what effect the people's complaints against municipal administration would travel

<sup>16</sup> SOURCE : Field Notes.

upto the Town Hall. The first channel will formally disappear in the case of superseded municipalities. The local politicians would then lose their civic forums for ventilating their grievances and their official role as the ambassadors of people's complaints would come to an end. But they remain active in local political activities and normally work through different pressure groups and voluntary agencies/associations. The municipal administrators have to face these people and groups.

The experience of Gujarat's separate personnel system of municipal administration shows that the departmental heads and the chief officer take a very responsive and sympathetic attitude towards the public complaints and grievances which are usually related to conservancy, public health, lighting, water supply, and drainage services. When citizens come individually with their complaints, it is the superintendent of the concerned department who listens to them and takes appropriate action. If the problem is somewhat knotty, the matter is referred to the departmental head. If it is connected with group politics in any area, the chief officer confers with the President and takes suitable measures. If elected councillors themselves bring in some pressure and ask for redress of grievances of their constituencies, the matter receives urgent attention. On the whole, the municipal personnel at the management level in Gujarat municipalities are placed in a vantage position to judge the gravity of a situation and appreciate the nature of the complaints because they belong to the locality and are intimately familiar with the local problems. Sometimes, the municipal officials themselves even act as complainants and prove to be more effective than the councillors in meeting the complaints. In Rajasthan municipalities, on the other hand, the transferable management personnel do not have this advantage of intimate knowledge of the local people and the locality. Usually an executive officer needs about six months to make himself familiar with the problems of the municipality, his own staff, and the nature of local politics. It has been found that the municipal officers in Rajasthan normally prefer to depend on their subordinate staff for handling the grievances of the people. It is the local connexions of the subordinate staff which does not allow quick redress of any

complaints nor are the complainants easily allowed to have direct access to the commissioner/executive officer. Most of the Rajasthan municipalities studied are, at the moment, superseded. Therefore the powers of the president and council are nominally exercised by the bureaucrat-administrators. They are usually the sub-divisional officers who have the charge of municipal administration as an additional duty over and above their normal work. In some cases, local politicians take people's complaints direct to the SDO or the District Collector who then monitor the complaints back to the municipal administration. The unified personnel system and frequent transfers do not allow the municipal management personnel much scope for developing local connexions and influences. They, therefore, prefer to play safe and take routine action in redressing people's grievances. When people know this attitude of the municipal officers, they naturally prefer to approach either local politicians or the sub-divisional officer for redress of their grievances against municipal administration. As a result of this, the image of municipal government is adversely affected in popular mind. The gap between the tax payers and the Town Hall appears too glaring because of the way the unified municipal personnel system has been so long managed. On a rough statistical estimate, it is found that formal complaints from citizens about municipal services, as recorded in the complaint book, are more numerous in Gujarat municipalities than in Rajasthan municipalities.<sup>17</sup> This is not because that municipal services are delivered more satisfactorily in Rajasthan than in Gujarat. Rather the people in Gujarat seem to have developed a higher expectation about the efficiency and responsiveness of their municipal administration than what is found in Rajasthan. In Gujarat the complaints are recorded because people seem to be confident of receiving a response. In normal cases, the municipal administration takes three to seven days to attend to the complaints.<sup>18</sup> This is not the condition in Rajasthan municipal administration where the higher-level personnel belonging to the unified service appear somewhat

<sup>17</sup>SOURCE : Field Investigation.

<sup>18</sup>SOURCE : Field Notes.

alienated from the feelings of the local people. Apparently they suffer from a constant fear of the next transfer and this fear prevents them from attacking the local vested interests and developing a personal identification with the local problem. Deeper empirical research might help discover the reasons of the alienation of the top management personnel in municipal administration in Rajasthan. □

## CONCLUSION

One of the main weaknesses of municipal administration in India has been the absence of a well-organised and effective system of personnel administration. No organisation can produce results unless competent personnel is attracted to it and retained. With increasing tempo of urbanisation, there has been a growing imbalance between people's aspirations and their civic needs and the actual performance of municipal administration. To meet adequately the tasks of urban development, an efficient personnel system is absolutely necessary.

Municipal bodies are entrusted with highly technical activities like valuation and assessment of properties (lands and buildings), town planning, construction of buildings and roads, promotion of public health measures including construction and maintenance of drainage and sewerage, checking food adulteration, and finally billing and collecting property taxes and other non-tax revenues. Therefore, it hardly needs any overemphasis to state that municipal personnel system should be so planned as to ensure integrity, competence, and commitment to duty on the part of municipal personnel. For this purpose an imaginative and well-thought-out personnel system is necessary for effective municipal administration.

## RESULTS OF THE INQUIRY

The issues examined in course of this empirical investigation have yielded a number of interesting conclusions. In gathering the harvest of this present survey, it is found that so far as the practical experiences of municipal administration in Rajasthan and Gujarat are concerned, the unified personnel system cannot be said to have scored definitely better over the separate personnel system in municipal administration. The first issue which has been examined was whether unified personnel system attracts and retains more qualified people than what are available in separate

personnel system. It has been found that in the unified system the calibre of municipal personnel is not decidedly superior to what is found in separate personnel system. And, it is important to note that if the municipality following a separate personnel system does have larger resources at its disposal, it can attract, and also retain, qualified personnel in its service. On the other hand, in the case of some technical officers like engineers, health officers and medical officers the unified personnel system also cannot attract highly qualified personnel because of the comparatively poor pay and lower prestige of municipal service. In the case of Rajasthan, for example, the majority of higher engineering posts are currently manned by engineers belonging to the state service. That means, it is integrated, and not unified, personnel system which can procure higher technical expertise for municipal administration.

Secondly, it has been found that the unified personnel system certainly ensures greater promotional opportunities and better service prospects for the municipal employees than what is possible under separate personnel system. But the accompanying assumption that improved career prospects would create stronger motivation for work and effective municipal administration is not found to be valid, because mere promotion prospects and better pay-scales do not comprehend the totality of job satisfaction. The heavy political overtone of transfer of municipal officers in Rajasthan is found to have ruined, to a large extent, their motivations for greater efforts. Both generalist and specialist officers in Rajasthan municipalities are hardly found to be contributing their best because of the high degree of political pressures in matters of municipal administration. Rather in separate personnel system, as practised in Gujarat, one can find better motivation for work among municipal officers who belong to the place they serve and climb up the hierarchy of municipal administration through service for years together.

The third critical issue was to examine the supposedly greater ability of the personnel of unified service to resist local political pressures in respect of policy implementation and internal management of municipal administration. It has been

found to be partially true in the sense that the purely specified and localised pressures from local politicians can be resisted by the officials of unified service. But such an officer is found to be either helpless or pliable when pressure comes from state-level politicians. That is to say, unified personnel system can, at best, push up the level at which political pressures and influences would work. The separate personnel system is, on the other hand, found to be very much susceptible to pressures and influences of local politicians. The municipal officials under separate personnel system can, at best, play off one group of local politicians to another group of local politicians within the municipal council in their efforts to neutralise the undesirable local pressures.

Fourthly, the experience of Rajasthan amply proves that the advantages of unified municipal personnel system cannot be fully derived and conflict management in municipal administration cannot be well performed unless all the intermediate and supervisory officials of subordinate grades, who provide the real nuts and bolts in municipal administration, are brought under it. The current practice in Rajasthan of leaving this group of personnel virtually in the hands of the municipality concerned does, in fact, negate some of the benefits which could have come from the unified personnel system in municipal administration. The popular image of municipal administration as corrupt and inefficient seems to have been built up largely because of the low calibre as well as the inefficient activities of the intermediate, supervisory staff of the municipal subordinate and ministerial service. This level of the hierarchical structure of municipal administration carries the real burden of municipal administration, serves as the link between the top managerial staff and the operational staff, supervises the field functionaries, comes into regular contact with the rate-payers and the general citizenry in the town : in short, this group of officials represents the real cutting-edge of municipal administration. If this group of personnel is left to be locally recruited and locally retained, and is not adequately trained, it is most difficult, if not impossible, for the few transferable officers at the top management level to improve the functioning and image of municipal administration. On the contrary, the local roots of the sub-



ordinate municipal staff most often create difficulties for the transferable higher staff in resisting pressures and/or influences of local politicians and fighting against local corruptions in such matters as valuation and assessment of house property, sanctioning building plans, detecting unauthorised constructions, preventing encroachment into municipal lands, and so forth. The very knowledge of the transferable superior staff that their tenure in a particular municipality is temporary offers them little incentive to take responsibility or build effective teams to coordinate their activities.

Municipality as a political institution suffers in public estimation because of the inadequate technical and managerial skills of the municipal personnel. Citizens continue to look to the upper levels of government than to the municipality for resources and development projects. Under this condition, the morale of the municipal personnel remains low and their skill remains weak. Eventually many among municipal personnel lose whatever commitment to municipal administration they might have had at the time of entering the municipal service. Therefore, the first thing which needs to be ensured is that service under municipal government is not *ipso facto* inferior to service under any other level of government. At least, the essential ingredients of personnel management like pay-scales, allowances, leave conditions, terminal benefits, career prospects, scope for self-improvement, incentives and motivations for better performance and so forth should be so planned that properly qualified staff could be attracted to, and retained in, municipal service. The issue, therefore, is how best it can be achieved—through separate municipal system or unified municipal personnel system.

The criteria laid down in the UN Report on local government personnel system (1966) are comprehensive.<sup>1</sup> Some of the items in this list, however, seem to be nothing more than pious wish; for example, it is really very difficult for any personnel system to completely ensure that the local officer would give 'honest advice' and 'courageous counsel' to the council and that he "should be protected against any adverse

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter 3, pp. 18-19.

effect", or, it is also not at all easy to put the local officer in a transferable service with all its practical implications and simultaneously expect from him that he would give "his best service" to the local authority and the people. At least, the experience of Rajasthan does not corroborate these criteria. It is found that in Rajasthan the elected municipal leadership experiences difficulties in working with their officials over whose recruitment, posting and disciplinary control they do not have any effective say. There have been many cases where the members of the unified municipal cadre defied elected municipal leadership and got away with it unscathed. In Gujarat the state government's recent proposal for creating a common cadre of municipal chief officers and internal auditors has been strongly resented by the elected municipal leaders, especially because of their apprehension of losing autonomy in controlling their own administration and of the likely tension in those cases where the political composition of the municipal council would be different from that of the ministry at the state level.

The argument that a unified municipal service *ipso facto* goes against municipal autonomy obviously cannot be accepted. 'Municipal autonomy' cannot mean the municipality's unfettered right of recruitment by discretion and patronage. The urban services traditionally rendered by municipalities have now become very much demanding because of the rapid rate of urbanisation and fast growth of population in urban settlements. Hence a merit service in municipal government seems to have become indispensable today. Besides, municipality's unfettered discretion of recruitment has another risk involved in it : the appointments which might have been politically influenced by one council would be exposed to the wrath of a politically different successor council which may be glad to get rid of such appointees. Moreover, the elected council would have no means of getting rid of any locally-appointed official, once he proves to be a misfit in the situation, except through severe disciplinary actions like dismissal which may not be always easy or even justified. The right of recruiting one's own personnel does not seem absolutely imperative inasmuch as both the union government and the state government them-

selves do accept personnel selected by independent service commissions. But what these higher level governments enjoy have been denied to the municipal government under unified personnel system, namely, the right of the political executive to control the administrative staff it has to work with. In the unified municipal personnel system, as practised in Rajasthan, the political executive at the municipality level has no controlling leverage over the unified service personnel. The necessary leverage over the municipal personnel has passed on to the state-level politicians and the state executive. This system of personnel management has proved to be detrimental to the effectiveness of municipal government worth its name. The speed and enthusiasm in implementing local development projects cannot be ensured by the elected municipal leadership which has been given no wherewithal to fight against bureaucratic lethargy and infidelity. The general experience of managing the unified municipal personnel system in India suggests that the personnel's stake in their career becomes high but their stake in a particular municipality becomes low.

#### BRITISH EXAMPLE

Considered objectively, the separate municipal personnel system seems to have a strong case in its favour. The best example of successful functioning of a separate municipal personnel system is found in Britain. Its success there is due to a combination of certain factors such as:

- (a) existence of certain national laws laying down standards of services to be rendered by local government;
- (b) enforcement of the merit system in local government service;
- (c) high standards of salaries of local government employees whose other conditions of service are generally either at par or fairly comparable with those of central government employees;
- (d) common pension system of local government employees facilitating mobility of personnel from one local authority to another;

- (e) existence of strong national level organisations of the professionals, which prevents maltreatment of qualified professional personnel by individual local authorities; this prevents corruption at the local government level to some extent;
- (f) existence of national level training institutions;
- (g) supervisory agencies at the national level; and
- (h) existence of the associations of local authorities to ensure common sound practices in the management of local government personnel.

None of these conditions exist in India. Quite naturally, therefore, the separate municipal personnel system has been condemned in India without taking into account its inherent potentials for improving municipal administration and creating necessary preconditions for its successful operation.

The pertinent point is to make municipal service as much attractive as service under other types and levels of public authorities, and then insist on institutional safeguards to ensure recruitment on merit and to prevent unjustified dismissal of municipal personnel. Mere transferability of personnel does not make a service efficient. If it is thought that occasional change of work environment or smooth mobility from one municipality to another would be good for enriching the experience, and freshening the outlook, of the personnel, this can be done in separate municipal personnel system also by introducing such conditions of service as would encourage more efficient and ambitious personnel to take up more professionally challenging and monetarily paying positions in course of his service career. But it would be essential to guarantee that municipal bodies do have : (a) sufficient resource capability to pay for qualified and skilled personnel; and (b) full disciplinary control over its staff. If the municipal personnel organise themselves on a strong professional basis at the state/national level, it would give them more service security and professional prestige than is available in a unified municipal service controlled by the state government. On the other hand, in a democratic set-up an association of municipal authorities, when well-organised, would be a morally stronger and more

efficient mechanism for negotiating with, and controlling, the municipal personnel than individual municipal bodies or the directorate of local bodies at the state level with all its bureaucratic and political limitations.

It is possible to adopt the separate municipal personnel system and eliminate some of its glaring defects. Municipal staffing can be controlled through rules formulated by the state government without creating state-wide unified municipal cadres. This kind of personnel system is followed by state undertakings and institutions of higher learning. The Rural-Urban Relationship Committee made a similar point in regard to the recruitment of qualified personnel to subordinate municipal services and retain them in municipal service by making their service conditions and pay scales at par with those laid down for posts of similar responsibilities in the state services.<sup>2</sup> Inadequate salary and scanty promotional prospect prove to be a liability, not an economy, in the long run. If larger financial resources can be devolved to municipal bodies, there is no reason why the separate municipal service cannot attract qualified and skilled people. There is a sort of a vicious circle in that low resources mean low-paid, hence low-qualified, staff which, in their turn, fail not only to raise resources but also to spend in a fruitful way whatever little resources the municipality has. Municipal bodies have complex tasks to perform and have the most difficult problems in the management, improvement and development of services in urban areas, requiring a high degree of administrative drive, initiative and technical expertise. The weaknesses in the administration of municipal bodies in India are most often wrongly attributed to separate municipal personnel system, whereas the real reasons seem to include weak financial base of municipal bodies, the complete absence of professional organisations, and the lack of any standard or norm of service from municipal government.

<sup>2</sup>United Nations, (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Public Administration Branch), *Local Government Personnel Systems*, New York, 1966, Vol. I, para 8.19, p. 79.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study of municipal personnel system in India has been humble in its approach, methodology and coverage. The data and arguments advanced so far in this study may nevertheless be of value to suggest some policy recommendations.

First, the problem of devising a suitable municipal personnel administration for municipal government has to be considered with reference to the larger issue of democratic set-up at the municipal level. Municipal government, or for that matter, local government as such is justified only if it is accepted as a politically accountable unit of the governmental system of the country, which enjoys a legitimacy for formulating local choices and using local discretion in developmental matters because of its being locally chosen by the people. Once the decision is taken at the national level to build up municipal government in this genuine sense of the term, the automatic implications should be adequate devolution of powers and development responsibilities and also necessary financial resources. Municipal bodies would then gain in prestige and public men of high calibre would feel encouraged to enter municipal councils. The moment it would be established that municipal government enjoys powers and responsibilities and is capable of giving adequate compensations, including pay, allowances and other benefits to its employees on a scale comparable to those available in the state and central governments, there would be no dearth of qualified and skilled personnel for municipal service.

Secondly, the problem of municipal staffing cannot be dealt with in a purely theoretical way and in isolation from the critical problem of municipal finance. It really appears somewhat immoral on the part of the state government to impose a unified municipal service and fix the qualifications, pay-scales and other allowances payable to the municipal personnel without devolving the necessary resources at the disposal of the municipal bodies.

Thirdly, the issue of municipal personnel administration seems to be intimately connected with the problem of building

up strong professional organisations and setting up the norms or standard of services expected from municipal administration. This exercise in institution-building would help improve the image of municipal administration and calibre of personnel.

Fourthly, if autonomy of municipal government is accepted as a political value, then either separate municipal personnel system with necessary provisions for eliminating its defects has to be accepted or unified municipal personnel system has to be modified by vesting the necessary powers of controlling the staff in the municipal bodies concerned. Otherwise, if bringing some skill and expertise in municipal administration is the only purpose, it can be better done through an integrated personnel system which would allow highly-skilled personnel of state or central governments to serve the municipal government for short periods on deputation. But integrated personnel system would have its own problems inasmuch as the personnel on deputation can never be expected to have the same degree of loyalty and commitment to municipal government as can be expected from the personnel in separate municipal personnel system. Moreover, the more experienced staff of an integrated service would have a natural tendency to leave municipal government and move up to higher levels of government. This could be an area of further research.

Fifthly, it has sometimes been suggested to combine the three varieties of personnel system—integrated, unified, and separate—in municipal administration. It has been argued that at the top management level, an integrated personnel system with personnel seconded from state/national services would have much advantage; unified system would be suitable for intermediate technical and supervisory personnel; and municipalities should enjoy freedom and discretion to select, and appoint personnel for minor municipal posts and all menial posts.<sup>3</sup> But it is quite possible that considerable tensions and conflicts would be created, in a municipal

<sup>3</sup>Government of India, Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Urban Development, *Report of the Committee on the Service Conditions of Municipal Employees*, New Delhi, 1968.

personnel system consisting of such heterogeneous elements with and different departmental institutional loyalties, and consequently efficiency and effectiveness of municipal administration would suffer. In addition, there is the bigger issue of control and accountability of the municipal staff. If any part of the total machinery of municipal administration, especially the upper levels of management, remains outside the effective control of the municipality, it would damage the status and prestige of municipal government as such. At least there is no concrete evidence to suggest that posting of state officers as administrators and departmental heads helps improve the level of efficiency and operational effectiveness of municipal administration. Further concrete research in this aspect of municipal administration is called for.

Sixthly, notwithstanding the changes in the scope and complexities in urban management as a result of rapid urbanisation during the last two decades in India, the classification structure in municipal administration has remained unchanged. Municipal governments usually follow the traditional classification of personnel into four classes (I, II, III, IV). This type of classification is based on the rank of the official and not on duties, responsibilities and skill required for a particular position. As a result, pay scales for jobs of similar nature and responsibilities not only differ from state to state but from town to town within the same state. Most often there is no clear job description and there is considerable confusion about what is expected of the employees. Moreover, a confusing array of designations and titles of the posts can be noticed, hence it becomes difficult to know the real nature of the work performed by the employees. Placement and promotion are governed more by the length of service than by merit. It is, therefore, suggested that an imaginative 'position classification' can rationalise the pay grades and privileges of the municipal personnel in terms of their duties and responsibilities. By 'position' is here meant a group of current duties and responsibilities assigned or delegated by a competent authority; 'position' is the ultimate functional unit of organisation. Position classification is a classification of positions and not a classification of the employees occupying them. In the United



States; position classification system in municipal government has brought certain advantages like rational pay scales, equitable compensation, fixation of responsibility, rational system of recruitment and selection, and clear lines of promotion. Introducing position classification system in municipal administration in India would entail some initial costs, but it is likely to bring in some concrete benefits. Position classification system in municipal administration would be just one of the means to achieve effectively the objectives and goals of a sound personnel system. The lags in introducing it in municipal administration in India seem to be mainly two: the high expenses involved, and its absence in the union and state government administration. These are serious difficulties, no doubt. But as municipal administration, more and more demands services of different kinds of specialists, position classification would be worth giving a trial, at least in big municipalities.

Finally, the effectiveness of municipal personnel system depends, to a considerable extent, upon the kind of training imparted to those who are entrusted with municipal administration, especially the technical and para-professional people. This aspect of municipal personnel system is utterly neglected in India, yet it is the personnel on whose performance depends the public image of municipal government. Whether it is tax collection, water supply, conservancy, slum improvement and so on, the procedures and practices cannot be fully taught in institutions of higher learning : these are to be learnt and re-learnt patiently from the field. For this purpose it is absolutely necessary to identify the training needs of municipal personnel and arrange to impart the necessary post-entry and in-service training.<sup>4</sup> Through an

<sup>4</sup>In U.K., apart from universities and colleges, there are many bodies engaged in imparting training to local government officers. These include individual municipal authorities themselves, the Local Government Examinations Board, the Provincial Councils, the professional institutions, the National and Local Government Officers' Association and the Royal Institute of Public Administration. See, *Report of the Committee on the Staffing of Local Government*, London, HMSO, 1967, p. 106.

In the U.S.A. training to municipal officials is imparted by several

(Continued on next page)

efficient system of regular training separate municipal personnel system can give a good account of itself. Training should be both in-service and orientation trainings. In-service training seeks to keep employees abreast of developments in their fields of activities, equip them for higher responsibilities, and diversify their skills. It should form part of a continuing duty of the organisation. Orientation training includes both general orientation of employees to the environment of work and also orientation to particular jobs. The basic idea behind training is to make employees feel that they are a welcome group to the organisation's functioning. Training policy is an indication of the organisation's growth policy; it meets the organisation's needs for change.

Personnel administration should seek to ensure that the organisation as a whole and the individuals composing it find that corporate purpose and individual purposes are reconciled to the fullest possible extent. Through working together of these purposes the municipal organisation would realise a genuine social benefit also. The problem of municipal personnel needs to be seen in the context of an overall problem confronting municipal government. Ad hoc reform measures have usually curtailed the autonomy of municipal government and deprived municipal bodies of their functions. It now seems absolutely necessary to review state-municipal relations from time to time so that municipal bodies could grow into politically, administratively and financially viable units competent to enforce effectively local choices and priorities regarding planning and development of their localities.

*(Continued from previous page)*

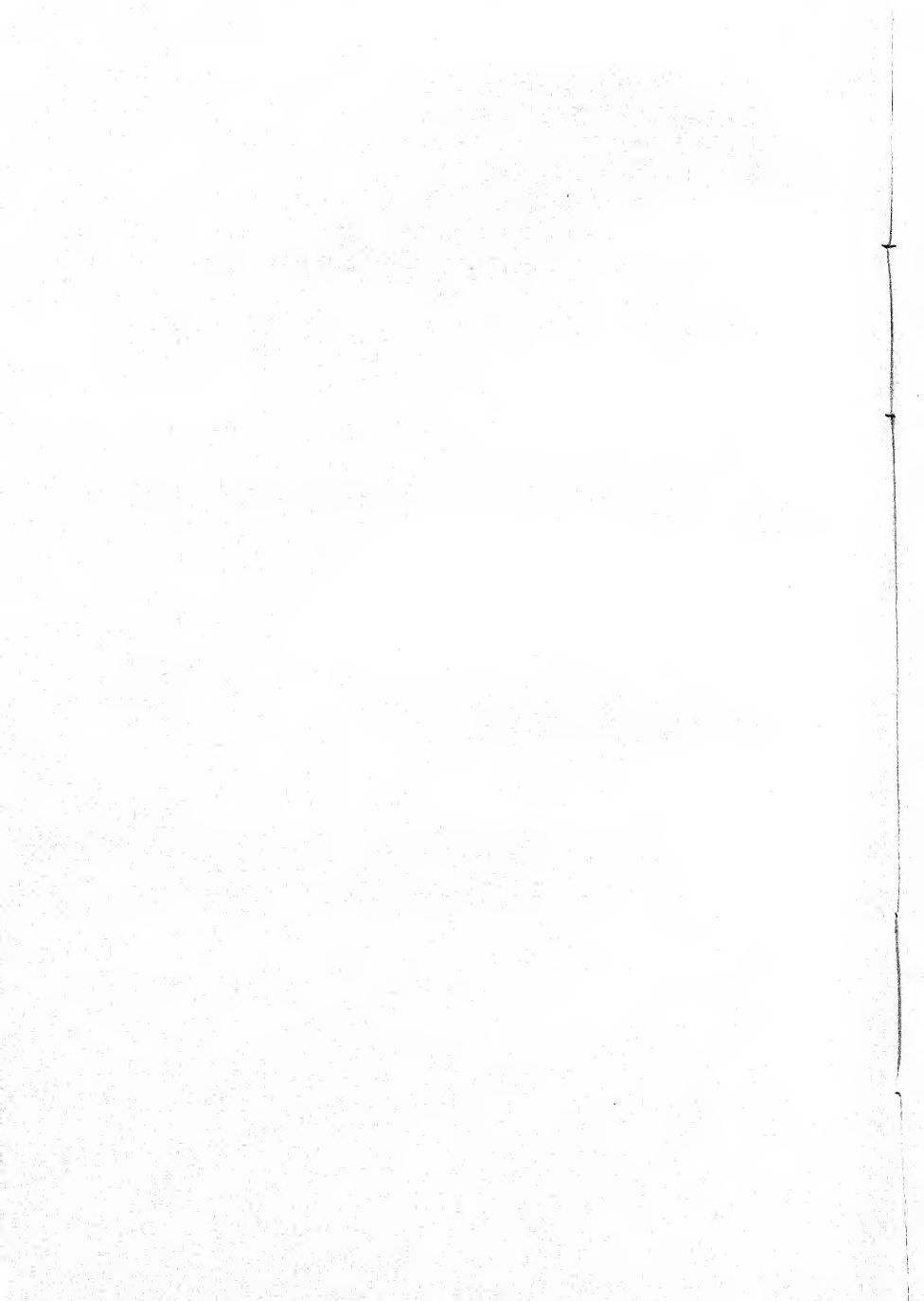
national civic organisations, universities and local institutions. As many as 60 universities provide pre-entry courses in municipal administration. Besides, considerable attention is paid to post-entry training to various categories of officials by civic organisations such as International City Managers' Association (Chicago), National Municipal League (New York City), and others. Municipal institutions themselves run schools for training of municipal officials. Federal government offers grant for post-entry training for all kinds of officials. See, *Report of the Committee on the Management of Local Government*, London, HMSO, 1971, Vol. IV, p. 110; also see Charles R. Adrian, *Governing Urban America*, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1961, p. 337.

It has to be noted that municipal government claims legitimacy for taking local decisions because it is locally chosen. Municipal bodies are basically politician-oriented institutions. The role of local politicians would always have an impact on the effectiveness of municipal government. The argument is simply like this: if municipal administration in India is weak, inefficient or corrupt, the system of personnel management is not alone responsible for this state of affairs and the remedy also cannot simply be found by changing the personnel system. The nature and calibre of local political leadership, the quantum of financial resources made available to municipal bodies, the degree of delegation of responsibilities for development activities to municipalities, and the popular expectation of municipal government all these factors are as much relevant as municipal personnel system for leaving an impact on the effectiveness of municipal government. This objective cannot be attained by simply replacing separate personnel system by either unified or integrated personnel system or a combination of all three types of personnel systems in municipal administration. Then, again, the enormous variations among municipal bodies in respect of their population sizes and annual incomes would always have an impact on the problem of municipal personnel administration. The nature and dimension of the problem of personnel management cannot be the same in a small and poor municipality as in a big and affluent municipality.

To conclude, the effectiveness of municipal government in service delivery to the citizenry is dependent on more than one variable. Personnel administration is a crucial variable, no doubt; but there are other variables like state-municipal relations, finance, and calibre of local political leadership. For evaluating the usefulness and suitability of municipal personnel system, it seems, therefore, absolutely necessary to get rid of what may be called the myopia of doctrinaire ideas and mechanical comparison of the outputs of municipal administration. If any particular type of personnel system is found to have injured the basic value system of municipal government, then fresh rethinking on municipal personnel administration is urgently called for.

Although based on limited evidence, the inevitable

conclusion of the present research is that unified or integrated personnel system is not *ipso facto* better than separate personnel system in municipal administration in India and that separate personnel system, when suitably reformed, would not only be an efficient instrument for serving the locality but would also be in conformity with the basic values of municipal government. The ideology of local democracy demands that municipal bureaucracy should be made fully accountable to the locally elected municipal leadership.



## *APPENDICES*



## Appendix I

## BASIC DATA ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITIES STUDIED

State	District	Municipality	Population (1981)*	Total Income (1982-83) Rs.	Total Number of personnel (officers + employees)	Percentage of Income spent on personnel (1982-83)
Rajasthan	Udaipur	Udaipur	2,61,000	2,07,69,000	1500	46.50
"	Tonk	Tonk	78,000	35,04,000	302	65.00
"	Chittorgarh	Chittorgarh	49,000	94,00,000	301	35.00
"	Jaipur	Sangare	22,000	25,00,000	135	45.00
Gujarat	Kheda	Nadiad	1,43,000	3,28,00,000	810	40.00
"	Junagarh	Veraval-Patan	1,05,300	1,35,58,000	776	38.17
"	Rajkot	Dhoraji	77,700	1,56,41,800	430	38.84
"	Kheda	Umreth	28,300	19,07,000	114	43.03

SOURCE : Compiled from the data supplied by the municipalities during field study.

\*Figures have been rounded-off to the nearest hundred.



Appendix II

STAFF PATTERN OF THE MUNICIPALITIES STUDIED

Municipality	Top Management		Middle Management		Operational		Total
	Executive	Technical	Supervisory	Clerical	Skilled	Unskilled Class IV	Casual (average)
Udaipur	2	10	18	70	60	840	250
Tonk	1	9	8	22	22	170	50
Chittorgarh	1	4	8	16	20	203	20
Sangare	1	1	2	6	5	90	20
Nadiad	2	4	24	100	200	300	30
Verabal-Patan	3	8	20	40	25	450	200
Dhoraji	2	3	10	30	45	260	50
Umreth	1	1	10	22	15	48	7
							114

SOURCE: Data supplied by the municipalities during field investigation.

### Appendix III

## A CASE STUDY OF PROMOTION IN RAJASTHAN MUNICIPAL SERVICE

Mr. 'X' was appointed as executive officer in a class IV municipality on June 19, 1962. No Service Rules were framed initially for regulating the recruitment to the Rajasthan Municipal Service at the time of his appointment. The relevant RMS Rules came in 1963. The Rules of 1963 made a provision for integration of the service of various classes of employees already working in the municipalities and it was made incumbent upon the competent authority to undertake the process of integration of the various employees. However, instead of acting upon the rules, the process of integration was much delayed and it ultimately came to be materialised in 1969.

At the time of integration Mr. 'X' was holding the post of EO of a class IV municipality. He was subsequently promoted to class III, and later to a class II post of executive officer on November 13, 1973.

The Rajasthan Municipalities Act 1959, read with the RMS Rules of 1963 provide for yearwise determination of vacancies. However, no step was taken by 'the competent authority' to determine the vacancies.

Rule 10 of the RMS Rules (1963) is couched in mandatory form and does not leave any room for waiving this rule. The determination of vacancies is also necessary for the reason that the posts of EO in different classes are required to be filled-up by promotion. Although the promotion posts had not been filled-up right from 1963, the state government's Department of Local Self-Government resorted to the practice of ad hocism in making promotions.

In 1981 Mr. 'X' had been holding the post of executive officer (class II) for the last eight years, but he was not confirmed in that class of municipal service. If all the vacancies had been determined yearwise, he would have been confirmed as EO (class II) in 1970.

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and, at the same time, the department proceeded to advertise the post of EO (class III) and selected persons by direct recruitment. Such persons were recruited from the open market and shown against the quota of direct recruitment, hence they were confirmed after the expiry of the period of their probation. Thus there was a partial implementation of the Rules of 1963 inasmuch as direct recruitments were made and persons were appointed through that method of recruitment. However, so far as the method of recruitment by promotion was concerned that was given a complete go-by. Mr. 'X' had to suffer the rigour of default on the part of the competent authorities in the state government.

A seniority list of the personnel belonging to Rajasthan Municipal Service was notified on June 19, 1981. This list clearly demonstrated that persons who had been directly recruited between 1973 and 1980 had been placed senior to Mr. 'X'. The reason probably was that the new entrants enjoyed 'substantive appointment' but the appointment of Mr. 'X' was shown as EO class IV, although he had been holding the post of EO class II even before the direct entrants to class III were recruited.

Even if the vacancies had not been determined in any year earlier to 1973 but the promotion quota of 1973 was filled in through Departmental Promotion Committee, by virtue of the operation of proviso (1) to Rule 28 of the RMS Rules of 1963, Mr. 'X' would have ranked senior to the direct recruits of 1973 and of subsequent years.

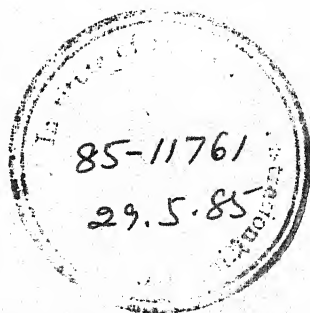
Thus, Mr. 'X' was relegated to a lower position only on account of the inaction on the part of the state government's Department of Local Self-Government and not on account of any disqualification of, or any adverse confidential report against, Mr. 'X'. That is to say, being in the unified municipal service under the state department of LSG for twenty years, Mr. 'X' faced the prospect of stagnation inasmuch as his juniors would get a march over him for all time to come.

Earlier in a case in 1978 (*M.P. Agarwal vs. State of Rajasthan and others*) the Rajasthan High Court had held that Rule 10 of the RMS Rules of 1963 was mandatory and 'the competent authority' was under obligation to make yearwise determination of vacancies. The court further held

that any subsequent change in the Rules cannot adversely affect the rights of the persons who were eligible at a particular point of time for promotion. This view was endorsed by the Rajasthan High Court in another case (H.K. Hingorani vs. State of Rajasthan and others, 1979). The Rules which were the subject-matter of interpretation in this judgment are couched in a language similar to the language used in Rule 10 of the RMS Rules of 1963. Hence Mr. 'X' was entitled to be promoted in a year earlier than 1973 or at least in 1973, and was, therefore, entitled to a position in the seniority list above the direct recruits of 1973 and subsequent years.

Mr. 'X' made a representation to the Director of Local Bodies asking for cancellation of the seniority list and expressing his intention to go to the court of law if his grievances in respect of promotion he was entitled to were not redressed. Ultimately he had to go to the court of law, and finally got his due promotion but again on a temporary basis. Mr. 'X' technically won his point but remained bitterly frustrated. The lesson of the case is that stagnation in the unified municipal service is created by temporary appointments made by the Director of Local Bodies.

The glaring default of Department of LSG and DLB lay in the fact that there had been no meeting of the Departmental Promotion Committee since 1960. Such standard of management of a unified personnel system practically negates one of the important objectives behind creating a unified municipal personnel system, namely, to produce contented and better motivated personnel for municipal administration by timely promotions. □



totality of job satisfaction. The heavy political overtone of transfer of municipal officers in Rajasthan is found to have ruined, to a large extent, their motivations for greater efforts. Both generalist and specialist officers in Rajasthan municipalities are hardly found to be contributing their best because of the high degree of political pressures in matters of municipal administration. Rather in separate personnel system, as practised in Gujarat, one can find better motivation for work among municipal officers who belong to the place they serve and who climb up the hierarchy of municipal administration through service for years together.

The third critical issue was to examine the supposedly greater ability of the personnel of unified service to resist local political pressures in respect of policy implementation and internal management of municipal administration. It has been found to be partially true in the sense that the purely specified and localised pressures from local politicians can be resisted by the officials of unified service. But such an officer is found to be either helpless or pliable when pressure comes from state-level politicians. That is to say, unified personnel system can, at best, push up the level at which political pressures and influences would work. The separate personnel system is, on the other hand, found to be very much susceptible to pressures and influences of local politicians. The municipal officials under separate personnel system can, at best, play off one group of local politicians to another group of local politicians within the municipal council in their efforts to neutralise the undesirable local pressures.

Fourthly, the experience of Rajasthan amply proves that the advantages of unified municipal personnel system cannot be fully derived and conflict management in municipal administration, cannot be well performed unless all the intermediate and supervisory officials of subordinate grades, who provide the real nuts and bolts in municipal administration, are brought under it. The current practice in Rajasthan of leaving this group of personnel virtually in the hands of the municipality concerned does, in fact, negate some of the benefits which could have come from the unified personnel system in municipal administration. The popular image of municipal administration as corrupt and inefficient seems to have been built up largely because of the low calibre as well as the inefficient activities of the intermediate, supervisory staff of the municipal subordinate and ministerial service. This level of the hierarchical structure of municipal administration carries the real burden of municipal administration, serves as the link between the top managerial staff and the operational staff, supervises the field functionaries, comes into regular contact with the rate-payers and the general citizenry in the town: in short, this group of officials represents the real cutting-edge of municipal administration. If this group of personnel is left to be locally recruited and locally retained, and is not adequately trained, it is most difficult, if not impossible, for the few transferable officers at the top management level to improve the functioning and image of municipal administration. On the contrary, the local roots of the subordinate municipal staff most often create difficulties for the transferable higher staff in resisting pressures and/or influences of local politicians and fighting against local corruptions in such matters



as valuation and assessment of house property, sanctioning building plans, detecting unauthorised constructions, preventing encroachment into municipal lands, and so forth. The very knowledge of the transferable superior staff that their tenure in a particular municipality is temporary offers them little incentive to take responsibility or build effective teams to coordinate their activities.

Municipality as a political institution suffers in public estimation because of the inadequate technical and managerial skills of the municipal personnel. Citizens continue to look to the upper levels of government than to the municipality for resources and development projects. Under this condition, the morale of the municipal personnel remains low and their skill remains weak. Eventually many among municipal personnel lose whatever commitment to municipal administration they might have had at the time of entering the municipal service. Therefore, the first thing which needs to be ensured is that service under municipal government is not ispo facto inferior to service under any other level of government. At least, the essential ingredients of personnel management like pay-scales, allowances, leave conditions, terminal benefits, career prospects, scope for self-improvement, incentives and motivations for better performance and so forth should be so planned that properly qualified staff could be attracted to, and retained in, municipal service. The issue, therefore, is how best it can be achieved - through separate municipal personnel system or unified municipal personnel system.

The criteria laid down in the U N Report on local government  
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personnel system (1966) are comprehensive. Some of the items in this

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1. See above Chapter 3, pp.22-24.

list, however, seem to be nothing more than pious wish; for example, it is really very difficult for any personnel system to completely ensure that the local officer would give "honest advice" and "courageous counsel" to the council and that he "should be protected against any adverse effect," or, it is also not at all easy to put the local officer in a transferable service with all its practical implications and simultaneously expect from him that he would give "his best service" to the local authority and the people. At least, the experience of Rajasthan does not corroborate these criteria. It is found that in Rajasthan the elected municipal leadership experiences difficulties in working with their officials over whose recruitment, posting and disciplinary control they do not have any effective say. There have been many cases where the members of the unified municipal cadre defied elected municipal leadership and got away with it unscathed. In Gujarat the state government's recent proposal for creating a common cadre of municipal chief officers and internal auditors has been strongly resented by the elected municipal leaders, especially because of their apprehension of losing autonomy in controlling their own administration and of the likely tension in those cases where the political composition of the municipal council would be different from that of the ministry at the state level.

The argument that a unified municipal service ipso facto goes against municipal autonomy obviously cannot be accepted. "Municipal autonomy" cannot mean the municipality's unfettered right of recruitment by discretion and patronage. The urban services traditionally rendered by municipalities have now become very much demanding because of the rapid rate of urbanisation and fast growth of population in urban

settlements. Hence a merit service in municipal government seems to have become indispensable today. Besides, municipality's unfettered discretion of recruitment has another risk involved in it: the appointments which might have been politically influenced by one council would be exposed to the wrath of a politically different successor council which may be glad to get rid of such appointees. Moreover, the elected council would have no means of getting rid of any locally-appointed official, once he proves to be a misfit in the situation, except through severe disciplinary actions like dismissal which may not be always easy or even justified. The right of recruiting one's own personnel does not seem absolutely imperative inasmuch as both the union government and the state government themselves do accept personnel selected by independent service commissions. But what these higher level governments enjoy have been denied to the municipal government under unified personnel system, namely, the right of the political executive to control the administrative staff it has to work with. In the unified municipal personnel system, as practised in Rajasthan, the political executive at the municipality level has no controlling leverage over the unified service personnel. The necessary leverage over the municipal personnel has passed on to the state-level politicians and the state executive. This system of personnel management has proved to be detrimental to the effectiveness of municipal government worth its name. The speed and enthusiasm in implementing local development projects cannot be ensured by the elected municipal leadership which has been given no wherewithal to fight against bureaucratic lethargy and infidelity. The general experience of managing the unified municipal personnel system in India suggests that

the personnel's stake in their career becomes high but their stake in a particular municipality becomes low. .

#### BRITISH EXAMPLE

Considered objectively, the separate municipal personnel system seems to have a strong case in its favour. The best example of successful functioning of a separate municipal personnel system is found in Britain. Its success there is due to a combination of certain factors such as:

- (a) existence of certain national laws laying down standards of services to be rendered by local government;
- (b) enforcement of the merit system in local government service;
- (c) high standards of salaries of local government employees whose other conditions of service are generally either at par or fairly comparable with those of central government employees;
- (d) common pension system of local government employees facilitating mobility of personnel from one local authority to another;
- (e) existence of strong national level organisations of the professionals, which prevents maltreatment of qualified professional personnel by individual local authorities; this prevents corruption at the local government level to some extent;
- (f) existence of national level training institutions;
- (g) supervisory agencies at the national level;
- (h) existence of the associations of local authorities to ensure common sound practices in the management of local government personnel.

None of these conditions exist in India. Quite naturally therefore the separate municipal personnel system has been condemned in India without taking into account its inherent potentials for improving municipal administration and creating necessary preconditions for its successful operation.



The pertinent point is to make municipal service as much attractive as service under other types and levels of public authorities, and then insist on institutional safeguards to ensure recruitment on merit and to prevent unjustified dismissal of municipal personnel. Mere transferability of personnel does not make a service efficient. If it is thought that occasional change of work environment or smooth mobility from one municipality to another would be good for enriching the experience, and freshening the outlook, of the personnel, this can be done in separate municipal personnel system also by introducing such conditions of service as would encourage more efficient and ambitious personnel to take up more professionally challenging and monetarily paying positions in course of his service career. But it would be essential to guarantee that municipal bodies do have (a) sufficient resource capability to pay for qualified and skilled personnel and (b) full disciplinary control over its staff. If the municipal personnel organise themselves on a strong professional basis at the state/national level, it would give them more service security and professional prestige than is available in a unified municipal service controlled by the state government. On the other hand, in a democratic set-up an association of municipal authorities, when well-organised, would be a morally stronger and more efficient mechanism for negotiating with, and controlling, the municipal personnel than individual municipal bodies or the directorate of local bodies at the state level with all its bureaucratic and political limitations.

It is possible to adopt the separate municipal personnel system and eliminate some of its glaring defects. Municipal staffing can be controlled through rules formulated by the state government without

creating state-wide unified municipal cadres. This kind of personnel system is followed by state undertakings and institutions of higher learning. The Rural Urban Relationship Committee made a similar point in regard to the recruitment of qualified personnel to subordinate municipal services and retain them in municipal service by making their service conditions and pay scales at par with those laid down for posts of similar responsibilities in the state services. <sup>2</sup> Inadequate salary and scanty promotional prospect prove to be a liability, not an economy, in the long run. If larger financial resources can be devolved to municipal bodies, there is no reason why the separate municipal service cannot attract qualified and skilled people. There is a sort of a vicious circle in that low resources mean low-paid, hence low-qualified, staff which, in their turn, fail not only to raise resources and but also to spend in a fruitful way whatever little resources the municipality has. Municipal bodies have complex tasks to perform and have the most difficult problems in the management, improvement and development of services in urban areas, requiring a high degree of administrative drive, initiative and technical expertise. The weakness in the administration of municipal bodies in India are most often wrongly attributed to separate municipal personnel system, whereas the real reasons seem to include weak financial base of municipal bodies, the complete absence of professional organisations, and the lack of any standard or norm of service expected from municipal government.

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2. Report (1966), vol. I, para 8.19, p.79.

### Policy Recommendations

The present study of municipal personnel system in India has been humble in its approach, methodology and coverage. The data and arguments advanced so far in this study may nevertheless be of value to suggest some policy recommendations.

First, the problem of devising a suitable municipal personnel administration for municipal government has to be considered with reference to the larger issue of democratic set-up at the municipal level. Municipal government, or for that matter, local government as such is justified only if it is accepted as a politically accountable unit of the governmental system of the country, which enjoys a legitimacy for formulating local choices and using local discretion in developmental matters because of its being locally chosen by the people. Once the decision is taken at the national level to build up municipal government in this genuine sense of the term, the automatic implications should be adequate devolution of powers and development responsibilities and also necessary financial resources. Municipal bodies would then gain in prestige and public men of high calibre would feel encouraged to enter municipal councils. The moment it would be established that municipal government enjoys powers and responsibilities and is capable of giving adequate compensations, including pay, allowances and other benefits to its employees on a scale comparable to those available in the state and central governments, there would be no dearth of qualified and skilled personnel for municipal service.

Secondly, the problem of municipal staffing cannot be dealt with in a purely theoretical way and in isolation from the critical problem of

municipal finance. It really appears somewhat immoral on the part of the state government to impose a unified municipal service and fix the qualifications, pay-scales and other allowances payable to the municipal personnel without devolving the necessary resources at the disposal of the municipal bodies.

Thirdly, the issue of municipal personnel administration seems to be intimately connected with the problem of building up strong professional organisations and setting up the norms or standards of services expected from municipal administration. This exercise in institution-building would help improve the image of municipal administration and calibre of personnel.

Fourthly, if autonomy of municipal government is accepted as a political value, then either separate municipal personnel system with necessary provisions for eliminating its defects has to be accepted or unified municipal personnel system has to be modified by vesting the necessary powers of controlling the staff in the municipal bodies concerned. Otherwise, if bringing some skill and expertise in municipal administration is the only purpose, it can be better done through an integrated personnel system which would allow highly-skilled personnel of state or central governments to serve the municipal government for short periods on deputation. But integrated personnel system would have its own problems inasmuch as the personnel on deputation can never be expected to have the same degree of loyalty and commitment to municipal government as can be expected from the personnel in separate municipal personnel system. Moreover, the more experienced staff of an integrated service would have a natural tendency to leave municipal government and



move up to higher levels of government. This could be an area of further research.

Fifthly, it has sometimes been suggested to combine the three varieties of personnel system - integrated, unified, and separate - in municipal administration. It has been argued that at the top management level, an integrated personnel system with personnel seconded from state/national services would have much advantage; unified system would be suitable for intermediate technical and supervisory personnel; and municipalities should enjoy freedom and discretion to select and appoint personnel for minor municipal posts and all menial posts. But it is quite possible that considerable tensions and conflicts would be created, in a municipal personnel system consisting of such heterogeneous elements with different departmental and institutional loyalties, and consequently efficiency and effectiveness of municipal administration would suffer. In addition, there is the bigger issue of control and accountability of the municipal staff. If any part of the total machinery of municipal administration, especially the upper levels of management, remains outside the effective control of the municipality, it would damage the status and prestige of municipal government as such. At least, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that posting of state officers as administrators and departmental heads

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3. Govt. of India, Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Urban Development, Report of the Committee on the Service Conditions of Municipal Employees, New Delhi, 1968.

helps improve the level of efficiency and operational effectiveness of municipal administration. Further concrete research in this aspect of municipal administration is called for.

Sixthly, notwithstanding the changes in the scope and complexities in urban management as a result of rapid urbanisation during the last two decades in India, the classification structure in municipal administration has remained unchanged. Municipal governments usually follow the traditional classification of personnel into four classes (I, II, III, IV). This type of classification is based on the rank of the official and not on duties, responsibilities and skill required for a particular position. As a result, pay scales for jobs of similar nature and responsibilities not only differ from state to state but from town to town within the same state. Most often there is no clear job description and there is considerable confusion about what is expected of the employees. Moreover, a confusing array of designations and titles of the posts can be noticed, hence it becomes difficult to know the real nature of the work performed by the employees. Placement and promotion are governed more by the length of service than by merit. It is therefore suggested that an imaginative "position classification" can rationalise the pay grades and privileges of the municipal personnel in terms of their duties and responsibilities. By "position" is here meant a group of current duties and responsibilities assigned or delegated by a competent authority; 'position' is the ultimate functional unit of organisation. Position classification is a classification of positions and not a classification of the employees occupying them. In the United States, position classification system in

municipal government has brought certain advantages like rational pay scales, equitable compensation, fixation of responsibility, rational system of recruitment and selection, and clear lines of promotion. Introducing position classification system in municipal administration in India would require some initial costs, but it is likely to bring in some concrete benefits. Position classification system in municipal administration would be just one of the means to achieve effectively the objectives and goals of a sound personnel system. The lags in introducing it in municipal administration in India seem to be mainly two: the high expenses involved, and its absence in the union and state government administration. These are serious difficulties, no doubt. But as municipal administration more and more demands services of different kinds of specialists, position classification would be worth giving a trial, at least in big municipalities.

Finally, the effectiveness of municipal personnel system depends, to a considerable extent, upon the kind of training imparted to those who are entrusted with municipal administration, especially the technical and para-professional people. This aspect of municipal personnel system is utterly neglected in India, yet it is the personnel on whose performance depends the public image of municipal government. Whether it is tax collection, water supply, conservancy, slum improvement and so on, the procedures and practices cannot be fully taught in institutions of higher learning: these are to be learnt and re-learnt patiently from the field. For this purpose it is absolutely necessary to identify the training needs of municipal personnel and

arrange to impart the necessary post-entry and in-service training. Through an efficient system of regular training separate municipal personnel system can give a good account of itself. Training should be both in-service and orientation trainings. In-service training seeks to keep employees abreast of developments in their fields of activities, equip them for higher responsibilities, and diversify their skills. It should form part of a continuing duty of the organisation. Orientation training includes both general orientation of employees to the environment of work and also orientation to particular jobs. The basic idea behind training is to make employees feel that they are a welcome group to the organisations functioning. Training policy is an indication of the organisation's growth policy; it meets the organisation's needs for change.

Personnel administration should seek to ensure that the organisation as a whole and the individuals composing it find that

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4. In U.K., apart from universities and colleges, there are many bodies engaged in imparting training to local government officers. These include individual municipal authorities themselves, the Local Government Examinations Board, the Provincial Councils, the professional institutions, the National and Local Government Officers' Association and the Royal Institute of Public Administration (See Report of the Committee on the Staffing of Local Government, London: HMSO, 1967, p.106).

In the U.S.A. training to municipal officials is imparted by several national civic organisations, universities and local institutions. As many as 60 universities provide pre-entry courses in municipal administration. Besides, considerable attention is paid to post-entry training to various categories of officials by civic organizations such as International City Managers' Association (Chicago), National Municipal League (New York City), and others. Municipal institutions themselves run schools for training of municipal officials. Federal government offers grant for post-entry training for all kinds of officials. (See Report of the Committee on the Management of Local Government, London: HMSO, 1971), Vol.IV, p.110; also see Charles R. Adrian, Governing Urban America, (McGraw Hill Book Company, 1961, p.337).



corporate purpose and individual purposes are reconciled to the fullest possible extent. Through working together of these purposes the municipal organisation would realise a genuine social benefit also. The problem of municipal personnel needs to be seen in the context of an overall problem confronting municipal government. Ad hoc reform measures have usually curtailed the autonomy of municipal government and deprived municipal bodies of their functions. It now seems absolutely necessary to review state-municipal relations from time to time so that municipal bodies could grow into politically, administratively and financially viable units competent to enforce effectively local choices and priorities regarding planning and development of their localities.

It has to be noted that municipal government claims legitimacy for taking local decisions because it is locally chosen. Municipal bodies are basically politician - oriented institutions. The role of local politicians would always have an impact on the effectiveness of municipal government. The argument is simply like this: if municipal administration in India is weak, inefficient or corrupt, the system of personnel management is not alone responsible for this state of affairs and the remedy also cannot simply be found by changing the personnel system. The nature and calibre of local political leadership, the quantum of financial resources made available to municipal bodies, the degree of delegation of responsibilities for development activities to municipalities, and the popular expectation of municipal government all these factors are as much relevant as municipal personnel system for leaving an impact on the effectiveness of municipal government. This objective cannot be attained by simply replacing separate personnel system by either unified or integrated personnel system or a combination

of all three types of personnel systems in municipal administration. Then, again, the enormous variations among municipal bodies in respect of their population sizes and annual incomes would always have an impact on the problem of municipal personnel administration. The nature and dimension of the problem of personnel management cannot be the same in a small and poor municipality as in a big and affluent municipality.

To conclude, the effectiveness of municipal government in service delivery to the citizenry is dependent on more than one variable. Personnel administration is a crucial variable, no doubt; but there are other variables like state-municipal relations, finance, and calibre of local political leadership. For evaluating the usefulness and suitability of municipal personnel systems, it seems therefore absolutely necessary to get rid of what may be called the myopia of doctrinaire ideas and mechanical comparison of the outputs of municipal administration. If any particular type of personnel system is found to have injured the basic value system of municipal government, then fresh re-thinking on municipal personnel administration is urgently called for.

Although based on limited evidence, the inevitable conclusion of the present research is that unified or integrated personnel system is not ipso facto better than separate personnel system in municipal administration in India and that separate personnel system, when suitably reformed, would not only be an efficient instrument for serving the locality but would also be in conformity with the basic values of municipal government. The ideology of local democracy demands that municipal bureaucracy should be made fully accountable to the locally elected municipal leadership.

# APPENDIX - I

## BASIC DATA ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITIES STUDIED\*

State	District	Municipality	Population (1981)**	Total Income (1982-3)	Total Number of personnel (officers + employees)	Percentage of Income spent on per- sonnel (1982-83)
				(Rs.)		
Rajasthan	Udaipur	Udaipur	2,61,000	2,07,69,000	1500	46.50
"	"	Tonk	78,000	35,04,000	302	65.00
"	Chittor-	Chittorgarh	49,000	94,00,000	301	35.00
"	Jaipur	Sangare	22,000	25,00,000	135	45.00
Gujarat	Kheda	Nadiad	1,43,000	3,28,00,000	810	40.00
"	Junagarh	Verabal- patan	1,05,300	1,35,58,000	776	38.17
"	Rajkot	Choraji	77,700	1,56,41,800	430	38.84
"	Kheda	Umreth	28,300	19,07,000	114	43.03

\* Source: Compiled from the data supplied by the municipalities during field study.

\*\* Figures have been rounded-off to the nearest hundred.

# APPENDIX - II

## STAFF PATTERN OF THE MUNICIPALITIES STUDIED\*

Municipality	Management			Operational			Total
	Top Management	Middle Management	Executive Technical Supervisory	Clerical Skilled	Unskilled	Class IV (average)	
Udaipur	2	10	18	70	60	840	250 1500
Tonk	1	9	8	22	22	170	20 50 302
Chittorgarh	1	4	8	16	20	203	29 20 301
Sangare	1	1	2	6	5	90	10 20 135
Nadiad	2	4	24	100	200	300	150 30 810
Verabal-Patan	3	8	20	40	25	450	200 30 776
Dhoraji	2	3	10	30	45	260	50 30 430
Umreth	1	1	10	22	15	48	10 7 114

\* Source: Data supplied by the municipalities during field investigation.



APPENDIX - III

A Case Study of Promotion in Rajasthan Municipal Service

Mr. 'X' was appointed as Executive Officer in a class IV municipality on 19 June 1962. No Service Rules were framed initially for regulating the recruitment to the Rajasthan Municipal Service at the time of his appointment. The relevant RMS Rules came in 1963. The Rules of 1963 made a provision for integration of the service of various classes of employees already working in the municipalities and it was made incumbent upon the competent authority to undertake the process of integration of the various employees. However, instead of acting upon the Rules, the process of integration was much delayed and it ultimately came to be materialised in 1969.

At the time of integration Mr 'X' was holding the post of E.O. of a class IV municipality. He was subsequently promoted to class III, and later to Class II post of Executive Officer on 13 November 1973.

The Rajasthan Municipalities Act, 1959, read with the RMS Rules of 1963 provide for year-wise determination of vacancies. However, no step was taken by "the competent authority" to determine the vacancies.

Rule 10 of the RMS Rules (1963) is couched in mandatory form and does not leave any room for waving this rule. The determination of vacancies is also necessary for the reason that the posts of E.O. in different classes are required to be filled up by promotion. Although the promotion posts had not been filled up right from 1963, the state government's Department of Local Self-Government resorted to the principle of ad hocism in making promotions.

In 1981 Mr. 'X' had been holding the post of Executive Officer (Class II) for the last eight years, but he was not confirmed in that class of municipal service. If all the vacancies had been determined year-wise, he would have been confirmed as E.O. (Class II) in 1970.

On the one hand, the promotion quota was not filled in and, at the same time, the Department proceeded to advertise the post of E.O. (Class III) and selected persons by direct recruitment. Such persons were recruited from the open market and shown against the quota of direct recruitment, hence they were confirmed after the expiry of the period of their probation. Thus there was a partial implementation of the Rules of 1963 inasmuch as direct recruitments were made and persons were appointed through that method of recruitment. However, so far as the method of recruitment by promotion was concerned that was given a complete go-by. Mr. 'X' had to suffer the rigour of default on the part of the competent authorities in the state government.

A seniority list of the personnel belonging to Rajasthan Municipal Service was notified on 19 June 1981. This list clearly demonstrated that persons who had been directly recruited between 1973 and 1980 had been placed senior to Mr. 'X'. The reason probably was that the new entrants enjoyed "substantive appointment" but the appointment of Mr. 'X' was shown as E.O. Class IV, although he had been holding the post of E.O. Class II even before the direct entrants to Class III were recruited.

Even if the vacancies had not been determined in any year earlier to 1973 but the promotion quota of 1973 was filled in through Departmental Promotion Committee, by virtue of the operation of proviso

(1) to Rule 28 of the RMS Rules of 1963, Mr. 'X' would have ranked senior to the direct recruits of 1973 and of subsequent years.

Thus Mr 'X' was relegated to a lower position only on account of the inaction on the part of the state government's Department of Local Self-Government and not on account of any disqualification of, or any adverse confidential report against, Mr. 'X'. That is to say, being in the unified municipal service under the state department of LSG for twenty years, Mr. 'X' faced the prospect of stagnation inasmuch as his juniors would get a march over him for all time to come.

Earlier in a case in 1978 (M.P. Agarwal vs. State of Rajasthan and others) the Rajasthan High Court had held that Rule 10 of the RMS Rules of 1963 was mandatory and "the competent authority" was under obligation to make year-wise determination of vacancies. The court further held that any subsequent change in the Rules cannot adversely affect the rights of the persons who were eligible at a particular point of time for promotion. This view was endorsed by the Rajasthan High Court in another case (H.K. Hingorani vs. State of Rajasthan and others, 1979). The Rules which were the subject-matter of interpretation in this judgment are couched in a language similar to the language used in Rule 10 of RMS Rules of 1963. Hence Mr. 'X' was entitled to be promoted in an year earlier than 1973 or at least in 1973, and was therefore entitled to a position in the seniority list above the direct recruits of 1973 and subsequent years.

Mr. 'X' made a representation to the Director of Local Bodies asking for cancellation of the seniority list and expressing his intention to go to the court of law if his grievances in respect of

promotion he was entitled to were not redressed. Ultimately he had to go to the court of law, and finally got his due promotion but again on a temporary basis. Mr 'X' technically won his point but remained bitterly frustrated. The lesson of the case is that stagnation in the unified municipal service is created by temporary appointments made by the Director of Local Bodies.

The glaring default of Department of LSG and the DLE lay in the fact that there had been no meeting of the Departmental Promotion Committee since 1960. Such standard of management of a unified personnel system practically negates one of the important objectives behind creating a unified municipal personnel system, namely, to produce contented and better motivated personnel for municipal administration by timely promotions.